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NYOYO ZIMEFURAHIKA: URBAN QASIDA IN ZANZIBAR.



Aïsha Schmitt

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in African Literature.

2012

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

Mwanzo kushika kalamu	Naanza Kiislamu
Bismillah kukadimu	Na Alhamdu pamoja
Namsalia Bashiri	Na Alize At-hari
Na Sahaba wenye kheri	Na sisi sote pamoja
Namshukuru Rahimu	Neema zake adhimu
Kwa Jadidi na Qadimu	Nazishukuru pamoja

Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy (1974: v)

In the beginning when taking the pen, I start in the Islamic manner,
Presenting a *Bismillah*, together with an *Alhamdulillah*.

I pray for the Bearer of Good News, and his purest relations,
And his blessed followers, and all of us together.

I thank the Merciful, for his exalted graces,
For the New and the Old, I thank for all of them together.

Abstract

Maulidis are at once enjoyable musical performances and Islamic veneration during social and religious celebrations, such as weddings and commemorations of the Prophet's birthday. Throughout the *maulidi* performance *qasidas* 'hymns' are recited alongside chapters of the *Mawlid Barzanji*, a prose hagiographic account of Muhammad's life written by Imām Ja'far al-Barzanji (1690-1766 AD). Another less frequently performed type is *Maulidi ya Homu*, which arranges a mosaic of several *qasidas* in a *dahala*.

The compositions praise the Prophet, recount his life or relate to their respective context of performance, combining moral appeals and celebration in their poetry.

The *qasidas* can be 'a cappella,' or accompanied by frame drums, or even synthesizers. Music, dancing, and audience participation are integral parts of the event. There is a gradual increase of speed, volume and flexibility across a *maulidi*. This climaxing is balanced by the codified structure of the events, which is defined by an alternation of readings from the *Barzanji* and the chanting of *qasidas*. The transitions are marked by formulae in a framing and nesting technique. Within, and possibly because of, this rigid framework there is a heterogeneity of styles. Music and text vary enormously between traditional and innovative forming a matrix of styles. Intertextual relations with past and contemporary texts from local and translocal genres are palpable in *qasida*.

In the East African archipelago of Zanzibar, *qasidas* are a centuries-old tradition ever more ubiquitous in the urban landscape. Social transformations and technological innovations (recordings and mobile phones) have contributed to its recent rise.

Qasida is a vital genre because it integrates new features and (media) contexts while at the same time keeping some core properties. It simultaneously creates and preserves tradition and there is no doubt about its ultimate principles: to praise the Prophet and to party (have fun).

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PREFACE

Terminology

The key terms of the thesis will be referred to herein in the following standard way. *Qasida* is one possible spelling (alongside *kasida*, *qaswida*, *qassida*, etc.) which does justice to its pronunciation in Swahili and reflects the word's roots as a loan from Arabic which continues to refer to Arabic compositions of the genre as well.

Mawlid refers to the longer Arabic compositions that recount the Prophet's life in either prose or poetry; such as *Mawlid Barzanji*.

Maulidi is the generic term for a celebration during which a *Mawlid* text is read and *qasidas* are sung. *Maulidis* are differentiated according to the type of *maulidi* that is performed: either *maulidi (ya dufu)* 'drumming *maulidi*' – this being the default *maulidi* the specification is usually omitted in local usage – or *Maulidi ya Homu* – a much less frequently performed type of *maulidi* – or according to the occasion for which it is performed: *maulidi ya harusi* 'wedding *maulidi*,' *maulidi ya mtoto* 'child's *maulidi*,' or *maulidi ya mfungo sita* or *Maulidi ya Mtume* 'Prophet's or sixth's month *maulidi*.'

Maulidi ya mtoto is often called *arbaini* (lit. 'forty') when it refers to the *maulidi* read 40 days after her or his birth to welcome the child into the community. Unless stated that it refers to the other type of *arbaini*, 40 days after someone's death, it will be used to refer to *maulidi ya mtoto*.

Additional Swahili and Arabic terms can be found in the glossary.

Technical Notes

A DVD with audio and audiovisual material is attached inside the back cover. Where there are audio or video tracks corresponding to text this is indicated by 🎵.

Sources

The sources cited can be found right after the thesis text. It includes a list of informants giving some essential data.

Secondary sources are listed in the bibliography, available recordings and films in the discography and filmography.

The corpus of song texts can be found in full in the appendix. All are numbered by a letter indicating the group and a number indicating the number of the song. Citations in the text also give line numbers.

Example: B13: 3-5 refers to Bakathir's fifth *qasida* in the corpus, lines 3 to 5.

Transliteration of Arabic script

For Arabic terms the Library of Congress Romanisation has been used.¹

It is characterised by th, j, kh, dh, sh, gh, and q. Other points to note:

1. The definite article 'al-' does not vary e.g.. al-shams, al-din
2. Diphthongs are represented by aw and ay
3. Doubled or long vowels are represented by the a, i, or u with a macron above
4. The pharyngeal fricative (ع) is represented by 'ʿ.'
5. The pharyngealised consonants are represented by the letters s, t, d, and dh with a dot below.
5. Conjunctions are written in full e.g. bi-al-Qahirah, wa-al-kitab, except for li- e.g. lil-mustaqbal.
6. *Ta' marbutah* is written 'ah,' except in an *idafah* (or genitive) construction where it is written 'at.'

As naturalised spellings, 'Qur'an', 'Hadith', 'sura' and 'Mecca.'

Swahili

Swahili including Arabic derived words are given in the Standard Swahili Spelling (BAKWATA) unless otherwise stated.

Translation

All translations from languages other than English are my own unless otherwise stated.

¹ A full version of the Romanisation table can be downloaded from <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsa/roman.html> [accessed 18.06.2011].

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My greatest thanks goes to my parents, without whose moral, academic, and financial support this project would never have happened.

Chapter One

Introduction



1.1 WHAT IS QASIDA?

‘Given that music is culture, that culture is expressed in myriad symbolic forms, and that symbols are always involved in a process of interpretation, analysis of musical behaviour and interactions surrounding musical events contributes to our understanding of social actions in a given community and of the cultural values that underlie them. *Maulidi*, as a symbolic process, is directly involved in the social dynamics of Lamu, Kenya. Whatever the purposes of a given reading – be they unifying or divisive – all are directed to the same end –To praise the Prophet.’

These are Boyd’s (1981: 166) concluding remarks to *Praising the Prophet*, to date the only benchmark book about *maulidi* in the Swahili context. Starting with his anthropological approach and taking it to youth culture, to literature, to Zanzibar and beyond ‘praising the Prophet.’ Furthermore I want to focus on *qasida* and *maulidi* ceremonies as their main context of performance.

But what are *qasidas*? The Swahili word and concept derive from the respective Arabic counterparts. In the Arabic context *qasida* are ‘Highly favoured and indeed treated as standard [...] a kind of ode (*qaṣīda*, plural *qaṣāʾid*) that fell into three parts, whereas a poetic composition dealing with a single theme was called *qīṭʿa*, (plural *qīṭaʿ*), a piece,’ implying that it was only a fragment’ (Cachia 2008).²

Although there are similarities, the Swahili notion of *qasida* is different to the Arabic and other, such as Urdu, Hausa, etc., (cf. Sperl & Shackle 1996) in many respects: textual composition and social realm of the genre to name only two.

Swahili *qasida* form a widely distributed and received, textual and musical genre. Its original setting is *maulidi*: live performances at weddings, other social celebrations, and for the Prophet’s birthday, but they are also listened to recreationally on the radio, CDs and mobile phones, and sung both privately and at *madrasas*. *Maulidis*, are at once enjoyable musical performances and Islamic veneration during social and religious celebrations. Throughout performances *qasidas* are recited alternately with chapters of the *Mawlid Barzanji*, a prose hagiographic account of Muhammad’s life written by Imām Jaʿfar al-Barzanji (1690-1766 AD). Another less frequently performed type is *Maulidi ya Homu*, which arranges a mosaic of several

² See also Allen (2005: 120-203) on Arabic *qasida* as a genre and its history .

qasidas in what is called a *dahala*. The majority of compositions praise the Prophet, recount his life or relate to their respective context of performance, combining reason, moral and emotional appeals as well as celebration in their poetry.

The *qasidas* are either a cappella, accompanied by frame drums, or even synthesisers. Music, dancing, and audience participation are integral parts of the event. Over the course of the performance, there is a gradual increase of speed, volume and flexibility across *maulidi*. This climaxing is balanced by pauses and the alternation with the slower readings from the *Barzanji* that are part of the codified structure of the events. Transitions between the elements are marked off by formulae in a framing and nesting technique. Within, and possibly because of, this rigid framework there is a heterogeneity of styles. The traditional range of topics (the Prophet, *dua* and congratulations, advice) is being expanded to the enjoyment of life and new topics (social issues); *qasida* prosody comes in the classical metrical and the *vugo*-type; the structure ranges from *shairi* to mosaic via bipartite; the stylistic options available include language choice (Swahili and Arabic), an array of rhetorical figures, and patterning by quality of voice.

Why study Swahili *qasida*? In contrast to similar genres in other parts of the Islamic world, for example Indonesian *modern kasida* or Arabic *muwashshah*³ and *nashīd* ‘Islamic chant, vocal music’ (Shiloah 2008), Swahili religious songs – unlike Swahili religious poetry – have had very little attention. That Swahili *qasida* are ‘religious chants’ or hymns is about all the information available:

‘**kasida:** tungo maalumu za kumsifu Mtume Muhammad (s.a.w.) zinazoimbwa katika *Maulidi*.’⁴ (Akida 1981: 102)

‘*Kaswida:* chants religieux, les *kaswida* chantent les louanges et la vie du prophète.’ (Ben Ali: 3)

‘[...] les élèves des écoles coraniques chantent les *Qasida* (poèmes chantés) en les accompagnant avec une musique de flûtes et de tambourins.’ (Chanfi 2002: 20)

Yet *qasida* is an important and pervasive genre performed during social and religious celebrations, such as weddings and celebrations in commemoration of the

³ *Muwashshah* is a type of stanzaic poem said to have originated in Al-Andalus (Schoeler 2008).

⁴ ‘Composition in praise of the Prophet [Muhammad], sung during *maulidi*.’

Prophet's birthday. The hymns are either sung a capella or accompanied by frame drums that are called *madufu* and sometimes *matari*. The differently sized *madufu* from soprano to bass used in Swahili *qasida* create compelling rhythmic lines (Graebner 2003: 11). The majority of compositions praise the Prophet, recount his life or relate to their respective context of performance. In weddings for example, they would include congratulations, blessings and advice directed at the couple.

During a *maulidi* the *qasidas* are recited alternately with of the *Mawlid Barzanji nathr*, a prose text written by Imam Ja'far bin Hasan bin 'Abd-al-Karīm al-Barzanjī (1690 - 1766 AD).

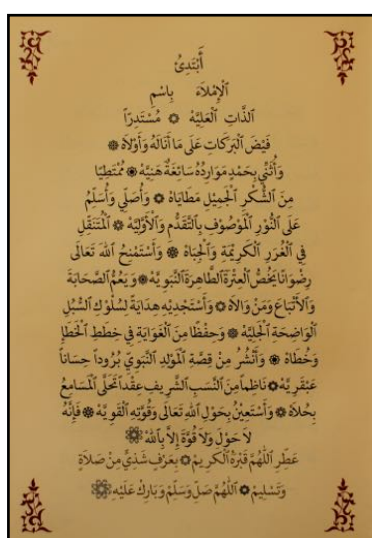


Plate 1.01 The first page of the *Barzanji* in a recent UK edition (Othman 2009).

As the title indicates, praising the Prophet and celebrating makes ‘the hearts merry.’ Time and again this is expressed in the *qasidas* themselves with two recurrent phrases: *Nyoyo zimefurahika* which simply means ‘the hearts are merry’ occurs in B13:1 and B16:3; most frequent *nyoyo zimetukunjuka* adds information on whose hearts are merry ‘the hearts have become merry/serene with us;’ and a couple of similar formulations can be found in B17:19 and T9:7. The title song *Nyoyo ‘Hearts’* (B13) is the first track (🎵 Track 1) on the accompanying DVD.

Moreover, through and beyond making the hearts merry, *qasida* seek to positively influence the behaviour of audiences. Advice is often formulated indirectly either by addressing a third person or by describing an ideal. The focal point in *maulidi* and *qasida* is the Prophet Muhammad who is described as *uswah hasanah* ‘an excellent model’ in the Qur’an (33:22), a statement that aptly captures the complimentary nature of praising him as an ideal and a role model for the believers.

While its ambiguity and subversive potential constitute the appeal and power of poetry, religion and Swahili culture have a conservative tendency: a combination that gives room for tensions and poses questions revolving around the idea of artistry and innovation, of retention and dynamics. Inevitably, this leads to enquiring about the historic dimension: the role of Islam in Swahili identity and its popular literary expression, and the social space and importance of the genre. The role of individuals, (religious) leaders and families, e.g. the Jamal al-Layl, cannot be underestimated in this context (cf. Bang 2003, Pouwels 1987).

Why urban Zanzibar? Since I was ten years old, I have travelled there regularly, either accompanying my parents on their respective fieldwork (both are anthropologists) or going by myself for holidays and to improve my Swahili. One evening during the first visit I accompanied my Zanzibari *mama* to a wedding *maulidi*. I was excited at staying up late, seeing all the sparkly dresses, the food, followed by rosewater and incense – but even more I was fascinated by the girls singing, playing the drums and dancing. Years later, in 2001, I travelled to Comoros. Upon my arrival my host family and I were preparing to spend the first night at the new house when a group of boys came to read a *maulidi*. The still bare rooms were instantly transformed into a more hospitable place. Despite the knowledge that both ceremonies were really the same thing I did not wonder about the connection. Having grown up with *taarab* music and being a great fan, my initial interest was there as well. For my MA dissertation I worked on the *taarab* songs of Mohamed Hassan, a composer and musician from the Comoros, partly because I liked his music and partly because I strongly felt the lack of academic interest in the Comoro Islands. Rather unusually his songs are philosophical reflections on the ephemeral nature of earthly life and deeply embedded in Islamic thought. This renewed my interest in religious music and when I wanted to learn more about *qasida* I realised there was very little in literature. Listening to recordings I soon discovered how much variety there was, both in the texts and their performance. The writing of proposals for a PhD project started me thinking more intensively and systematically about *qasida*, its history and social context. But it was not until a short stay in Zanzibar in the summer of 2008 that I began to realise just how great the diversity was in Stone Town alone and that research about this variety in the urban styles

(rather than a comparison of urban and rural styles) would yield more than enough material for a PhD project. Another topic that presented itself to me in the field was the discourses about *qasida*. Of course I had thought cursorily of local interpretation and the controversies about the legitimacy of music in Islam. But just how much everybody talks about *qasida* and what this really meant only became apparent then and there. So an intuitively picked topic has proved to be a great choice and I have become ever more intrigued with its complexity and fonder of the music.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Qasida is a fascinating, multifunctional genre. However, it has received relatively little attention in research. So far, a number of publications (Abdallah 2001, Boyd 1981, 1985, Knappert 1971, Martin 1972, Middleton 1992, Olali 2004, Pouwels 1987) cover *maulidi* from an anthropological perspective summarising the content of the Arabic texts of the *Mawlid Barzanji* (also *Sharaf al-Anān* or *Maulidi ya Utaya*), but the powerful para-liturgical interludes are only ever mentioned in a footnote. An adaptation of the *Barzanji* by Sayyid Mansab was published by Harries whose introductory notes state that ‘there is a chorus in which the faithful were expected to join’ (1958: 105). Studies of Islam and Islamic education in East Africa (Becker 1911, Brye 1985, Chanfi 2002, El Zein 1974) as well as Swahili and Comorian weddings adopt a similarly brief indication of its existence (Chouzour 1994, Direche-Slimane & Le Houérou 2002, Ottenheimer 1985).

When Knappert describes the festivities in Lamu,

‘During these ceremonies many recitals of religious texts take place, and many of these texts are called *maulidi*. The *maulidi* is a song of praise in honour of the Prophet, with narrative passages describing the conception, birth and life of Muhammad.’ (1979:207)

he seems to confound *maulidi* and *qasida*. His assessment of the texts are to me also inadequate as his observations are clearly restricted to the domain of *maulidi*: ‘The *maulidi* texts are all in a fairly conventional language, so that there is little room for the poets to show their individual power of versification. [...] It is sung traditionally by the congregation under the guidance of the *muallimu*, the religious teacher, and his *wanafunzi*, apprentices’ (1979:207). By far the most extensive and informative accounts are to be found in the line notes accompanying published recordings (Bois et al. 2004, Boyd 1985, Graebner 2003, Sandahl 1997) and the two short feature films by Penrad (1995, 1997).

Boyd’s (1981) PhD on *maulidi* in Lamu examines the ritual from an anthropological perspective. While his study situates *maulidi* religiously and musically and analyses it as a symbolic cultural phenomenon, he does not look at the texts that are recited very closely and not as *qasida* texts at all. Of course as an anthropologist his aim

was not to provide a literary analysis of the genre, but he does give a useful working definition of *qasida*:

‘The term *kasida* is widely used for all religiously oriented poetry and hymns. *Kasida* may be sung by school boys in mosque schools, by women meeting in a private home for prayers, or during *maulidi* celebrations by anyone who wishes to contribute a song in addition to the readings (1981:46-47)

While it is true that *qasida* refers to any religious song clearly its chief domain is *maulidi*. At least in Zanzibar today it is not possible to just start singing a *qasida* at a *maulidi* and have everybody else join in as Boyd describes it for Lamu. Usually in Zanzibar the *qasida* are chosen by the group’s leader. Thus, the distinction between performers and audience is much more clearly marked here.

A second important point he mentions is the opposition of *qasida* and *nyimbo*:

‘The most important point, however, is that the poems sung to melodies during *maulidi* are not *nyimbo*, or “songs”, in a secular sense. In standard Kiswahili *nyimbo* is the common term for “songs” but in Kiamu [...] it is used only for secular songs such as love songs or political poems. In order to avoid confusion, the term *kasida* will be used herein to mean any religious song in any context which is in keeping with local usage [...]’ (1985: 48).

Boyd explains that *nyimbo* are performed mainly at weddings and provides short descriptions of a number of ‘secular’ musical genres and dances, among them *vugo*, *chakacha*, *lelemama*, *kirumbizi* and *goma* (1985: 36-37). He contrasts the topics of *nyimbo* (‘secular’) and *qasida* (‘religious’) and their instrumentation (no other instruments than *tari* and *nai* in *qasida*). Certainly this notion exists also in Zanzibar but not as clear cut as he states here. First of all, it is contentious what the terms ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ mean and whether a European/Western concept of this distinction applies to the Swahili context as well. Even without these further complications the very existence of a local discourse about what is *qasida* and what is not reveals the problematic nature of definitions. The founders of Tarbiya say *qasida na nyimbo zimeingiliana* ‘*qasida* and songs are intertwined.’ And the current director of Stone Town institution Bakathir and imam of Mskiti Gibreel, Sheikh Abdulrahman goes even further when he states *qasida ni nyimbo* ‘*qasida* are songs.’⁵

This is Zanzibar today, both historically and demographically radically different from Lamu 30 years ago. Over the last decades global influences (that were always an

⁵ For further discussion of this issue see below 1.4.1, 2.6 and 3.5.

important factor on the East African coast) have become much faster and more easily available. Zanzibar society at large is affected by the media and tourism. More directly relevant for the context of *qasida* are Indonesian, Arabic and Western musical styles that especially had an impact on the instrumentation used and the aesthetic of videos. However dissimilar the two places might be, his description and analysis of *maulidi* is helpful. His vivid depiction of the scene of ‘*ulamā*’ and the male sphere in general is competent but needs to be balanced by an insight into the equally important, active female scene in both the religious and literary realms.

One of Boyd’s important sources on the history of Islam in East Africa and especially in Lamu is El Zein’s *Sacred Meadows* (1974). Complemented by Bang’s (2003) recent study of the ‘Alawī Comorian-Yemeni-Zanzibari brotherhood, the two have been valuable resources for the history of the *maulidi* ritual on the East African coast, which is outlined in the performance chapter (3.1).

Other sources for the history of Islam and other socio-economic developments are Trimingham (1964) but more so the archaeologically backed accounts of Horton and Middleton (2000). Valuable information even though out-of-date is Trimingham’s ‘Islamic Organization’ chapter where he runs through the *tariqas* found in East Africa and their practices including *maulidi*, *qasida* and *dhikr*⁶ (1964: 90-103)

A valuable source for the history of Islamic education specifically in Zanzibar including both the pre- and post-revolutionary time is Loimeier’s extensive work on the subject. It is not only abundant with material but also an insightful analysis of historical events, which set the background for *maulidi* and *qasida* in chapter 2.

As to Swahili poetry, there are a number of interesting sources especially for older compositions and manuscripts. However, these say very little about their respective context of performance and In his *Swahili Culture* (volume 2) Knappert juxtaposes Swahili and other African Islamic literatures. Consider his comparison of Hausa genres (as described by Hiskett 1969: 10) with Swahili ones:

‘It might be of interest to note that all these categories exist also in Swahili literature, though their relative importance is different. [...] There is, however, a very important subcategory of Swahili *kasidas*, namely the *Maulidi*,

⁶ *dhikr* or *dhikiri*:

‘1) mention the name of God;

2) to take part in the ritual called *dhikiri*, which might be described as a meeting, or sort of dance, in which the people meet in order to mention the name of God [...]’ (Johnson 1939: 74)

panegyrics sung at the Prophet's birthday during the week following the 12th Rabi'u 'l-Awwal. However, in this ! "##%& literature all the conventional praises are repeated that Hiskett mentions in this Hausa category [Madih an-Nabii].' (Knappert 2005: 582)

His confusing terminology is explained by himself later in the book: '*Maulidi* in Swahili means the celebration of Muhammad's birth and any text recited or sung during that event. *Maulidi* is derived from Ar. *mawlid* 'place or time of birth.' [...] Orthodox scholars frown on the celebrations since the *mawlid* does not belong to the original Islamic calendar of rites: it is *bidaa* "novelty."'

He then goes on to briefly sketch a *maulidi* celebration, which seems like a Lamu one (*ngoma ya simbo* 'stick dance') but this is not the way it is done in Zanzibar.

'This writer has collected, edited and published the known texts written by Swahili poets since the nineteenth century. Reciters choose the most popular poem of the day; sometimes a new version is launched. The narration is completely traditional [...]. A line of prayer or a pious refrain follows every stanza of the narration. There are a number of Arabic prose versions interspersed with versified prayers that have served as models for the Swahili versions which are all in verse.' (Knappert 2005: 670-671)

Whether his description is accurate for Lamu is questionable, *maulidi* in Zanzibar are definitely different today.

The *maulidi* poems that narrate the *sira* 'life, ways' of the Prophet that exist in Swahili are analogous to the *Barzanji*. They are interesting only in so far as how Islamic poetry has previously worked in Swahili and as possible inspirations for modern-day *qasida*.

In his three-volume *Swahili Islamic Poetry* (1971) Knappert provides a more detailed description of the ceremony (Vol. 1: 30-60) which includes a complete translation of the prose *Barzanji* (1971, Vol. 1: 48-60). After an outline of Muhammad's depiction from a theological viewpoint, he finally comes to the *maulidi* as such (1971, Vol. 1: 41-47) where he sets out to mention some features of *maulidi* celebrations in other parts of the Muslim world (Egypt, Java, Turkey, Nigeria, Morocco, 1971, Vol. 1: 41-43). As a valuable source, he includes the programme of a *maulidi* held in Dar es Salaam in 1963 which shows the typical alternation of chapter from the *Barzanji* and *qasidas* or readings from the Qur'an and *khutbas* 'sermons.'

Most interesting in his explanations is the letter written to him by Yahya Ali Omar from Mombasa that paints a vivid picture of a *maulidi* including the course of

readings, the singing of *qasida*, opening and closing *dua*, being perfumed with *marashi* 'rose water,' *ubani* 'incense' and *udi* 'aloe wood,'⁷ and a communal meal (1971, Vol. 1: 46-48).

His claim that Swahili literature was 'entirely Islamic from its inception in 1728 until the advent of the German administration in 1884' and that 'even after that, up till the present day, Swahili Islamic literature amount[ed] to well over half of the total body of texts produced [...],' (1971, Vol. 1: 5) is highly contentious. However, he rightly points out the overall importance of Arabic Islamic literature in the emergence of a Swahili literary tradition:

'The oldest known Swahili text, the Hamziyya, is a translation from an Arabic poem in the classical style by Sharafu'd-Dini Al-Busiri. The Maulid Hymns too, are translations, often considerably abridged, of existing classical Arabic poems. In general, the *Kasida* style poetry in Swahili is evidently borrowed from Arabic, although early examples of didactic Swahili poetry in the same style show that Swahili poetry found its own fashion at an early date in its development.' (1971, Vol. 1: 9)

Further on he points out the ritual functions of certain popular Islamic texts that are recited during specific ceremonies and that they represented the 'religious conceptions of the common people.' (1971, Vol. 1: 9-10) And he rightly states that in recent decades (by now a century) Muslims have used the same texts, such as the *Barzanji*, and even the same textbooks from Indonesia, to Pakistan and Southern Arabia as in East Africa. (1971, Vol. 1: 11)

He presents the texts of Swahili *Maulidi* compositions at the end of Volume 1 (*Maulidi* rhyming in *da*, *Maulidi* in *wa*) and in Volume 3 (*Ukawafi wa Miiraji*, *Maulidi ya nuni*, *Maulidi ya Mansabu* and *Maulidi ya Jambeni*).

More descriptions of a similar kind but much shorter and presentations of primary texts (but not *qasida*) can be found in: Knappert 1979:207-208, 1985, Vol.1 & 1999: 102-104.

In his Swahili Songs Knappert provides an interesting overview of genres. Though I do not entirely agree with his systematisation, it is a note-worthy idea (2004:538).

Topan mentions *maulidi* as the most important means of conveying the life and image of the Prophet Muhammad and mentions that *qasida* are sung during *maulidi* (2001:113).

⁷ The aloe wood is cooked with sugar and aromatic oils. *Udi* corresponds to Arabic *bukhūr*.

Nuotio (who did her research in villages of the Northern Coast of Unguja and Tumbatu, Zanzibar archipelago) defines *qasida* in a footnote: 'While the Arabic *qasida* is a highly refined poem, the Swahili *kasida* is more often a simple quatrain or hymn in Kiswahili, sometimes mixed with Arabic phrases. The *kasidas* are composed locally, also by women, and usually inspired by religious texts.' (2006:189)

'The centrality of the *maulidi* ritual is also expressed by the fact that the most common text, the *Maulidi ya Barzanji*, and the accompanying *kasidas* as well as the drumming and dancing are part of the curriculum in the Qur'anic schools.' (2006:193)

Useful is her application of Mauss' term 'total social phenomenon' (1970) for communal *maulidi* (Nuotio 2006: 194).

She shows some of the connections that exist between *madrasas* along the Swahili coast through the 'Alawiyya, that she therefore calls '*tariqa* of the Tambourines' (2006: 203-205).

'Even more surprising is the central role women have played not only as organisers, participants and performers of *maulidi* celebrations, but also as initiators and propagators of the ceremony. More research is necessary to get a complete picture of the origin of the *maulidi ya dufu* and the women's dance.' (2006: 206)

Even though I do not share her surprise at the women's central role I support her call for more research on the popular expressions of religion and women's role(s) in them.

Kresse (2006) analyses the on-going debates on *maulidi* mainly in Lamu but strangely does not mention *qasida*.

An invaluable source for the historical developments of Islamic education in Zanzibar has been Loimeier's (2009) extensive study of the topic, especially for the position of *qasida* and *maulidi* within religious education curriculums and the role of 'Alawiyya scholars. See chapters 2 and 3.1 for details.

Abdulaziz' (1996) article in the seminal compilation of *qasida* traditions from all over the Muslim world (Sperl & Shackle 1996) deals, as the title indicates, with 'the influence of the *qasida* on the development of Swahili rhymed and metered verse' (1996:411) rather than with Swahili *qasida*. Nevertheless, his tracing of early influences of Arabic poetry on the contents and prosody of Swahili poetry and

common stylistic features are a finely balanced contribution to situating Swahili poetry in relation to other poetic traditions, especially the Arabic one, which is a significant basis for my study. His most significant conclusion is that Swahili metrical patterns were significantly modified to be set to melodies of various kinds (1996:428). Just like the poetry, Swahili music has appropriated melodies from India, South Arabia, the Gulf and Egypt. 'This seems to have happened also with Arabic *qasida* itself, when *muwashshah*, *muzdawij*, *zajal* and *musammat* forms were introduced for reasons of accommodation to new melodies and popular songs.' (1996:428)

The recent work by Vierke (2011) is an in-depth study of an *utendi*, complete with critical edition and an extensive stylistic analysis. Lacking the information, her linguistic analysis focuses mostly on the written (manuscript) culture rather than including the performative dimension. For her, the musical aspect is limited to prosodic structuring. Her notion of *qasida* is limited to what is taken from the above mentioned article by Abdulaziz on the influence of Arabic *qasida* on Swahili poetry (2011: 51-54). Most interesting is the analysis of the variety of functions of this poetic text which includes morals as well as historiography.

A number of ethnomusicological and literary studies inform this thesis on various aspects: Musical practice as a producer of national culture (Askew 1997), as revealing of gender roles (Askew 2000), as a distinct social phenomenon (Campbell 1983), and as political history (Fair 1996, 1997); the process of localization through women's participation in *taarab* (Topp Fargion 1992), expressive culture in general (Eastman 1984), and on *vugo* in Mombasa (Topan 1995). All other relevant academic work will be cited in situ throughout this thesis.

The paucity of secondary sources specifically on *qasida* on the Swahili coast makes the oral information, participant observation and the *qasidas* themselves all the more important.

1.3 FIELDWORK

Some preliminary fieldwork was conducted in urban Zanzibar from July to September 2008. During this time I established contact with four *madrasas* from different backgrounds in various parts of town: Madrasat an-Nour a long-established, scholar-led institution in Stone Town (‘Alawiyya); Madrasat Swiffat Nabawiyatul Islamiya ‘Msolopa’ in Kilimani (Shādhiliyya) famous for their rhythmic drum play; the family run Madrasat Zamzam in Raha Leo who composed an innovative *qasida* on AIDS; Madrasat Tarbiya Islamiya a youth initiative in Mfereji wa Wima who experiment with other instruments (*qanun*). Acquaintance was made with the Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni (Barua) and Bi Sania, an elderly woman who has her own female-only *madrasa* and mosque. One other *madrasa* that performs in the ‘disco *maulidi*’-style remained to be chosen.

I attended seven *maulidis* performed by Bakathir, and two performed by the Msolopa girl’s group. All of these were recorded (audio) and documented in photographs. In addition I recorded ten *qasidas* with Zamzam and 26 with Bakathir. With them I also recorded the first four chapters of the *Barzanji* separately. Mwalimu Mohammed from Msolopa recited the fourth chapter of the *Barzanji* in Arabic with each verse followed by its Swahili translation or adaptation, which was also recorded. I also had access to unpublished recordings of Tarbiya and Msolopa by Werner Graebner.

Also the *mabuku* ‘books’ of the four *madrasas* were photographed.



Plate 1.02 Ibrahim’s *buku*, 23.08.2008

Part-structured interviews and conversations have been conducted with several renowned scholars and *qasida* teachers: Mwalimu Muhammad Salim Muhammad, Sheikh Abdulwahhab Alawy, Sheikh Sameer Zulfikar Ramzan, Mwalimu Muhammad Abdallah Rajab, Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Habshi, Mwalimu Muhammad Idris, Sheikh Abulkheir Hassan Muhammad, Mwalimu Ibrahim Bakar Salum, Sheikh Muhammad Abdulrahman Mwinyi 'Dedes', Aman, Rajab and Nassor from *Tarbiya Islamiya*, Mlinge from *Zamzam*, Yunus Abdallah Sameja. In addition there were informal conversations with the boys from Madrasat an-Nour and the girls from Swiffat Nabawiyatul. On many occasions I spoke about *qasida/maulidi* with my host family (Salma Salim Abdallah, Bikombo) and friends (Abubakar Mikidad, Farid Himid, Farouque Abdela, Talib Ali Talib, Mohammed Taj).⁸

The main fieldwork was conducted from July 2009 to June 2010. To be in Zanzibar for a whole year enabled me to cover the full cycle of events and attend all important Islamic holidays for which special *qasidas* are composed: Miraj (20.07.2009), Ramadan (from 22.08.2009), Eid al-Fitr (21.09.2009), Hajj (from 17.11.2009), Eid al-Adha (27.11.2009), Ashura (21.12.2009) and most significantly the Mawlid al-Nabī/Maulidi ya Mtume (26.02.2010) which is celebrated not only on the day but during the whole of *Mfungo Sita* (Rabīʿ al-Awwal) and even the following month. In addition, the weeks before Ramadan is the main wedding season when a lot of *maulidis* take place.

Moreover, a whole year meant I had time to spend with each of the groups to establish the familiarity vital for participant observation.

During the fieldwork I wanted to find out about the meaning of *qasidas* and their stylistic idiosyncrasies; the local interpretation of songs that also reveals the ways in which meaning is constructed in this society; how one accounts for the thematic and formal diversity within this single genre; the place of *qasida* within the Swahili poetic system; the interfaces between oral and written literary features; the importance accorded to *maulidi* in its different social contexts and to the performance of specific songs; the degree of flexibility of performance regarding both the variability or fixity of texts and the ritual in general; the process of composition and transmission; the history of the *madrasas* and their respective religious affiliations; the social prestige and cultural values associated with different

⁸ See the list of informants under 'Sources' for details.

parts of town (especially the perceived dichotomy between Stone Town and *Ng'ambo* 'the other side'); the motivations of performers especially the youths who experiment with new forms but also those who participate in the more traditional kinds; *qasida*'s cross-cultural connections namely to Arabic *nasheed* and Indonesian *kasida*. And this thesis sets out to answer the above questions.

Although there was a detailed plan for the fieldwork outlining what I would do and what I was trying to find out, while in Zanzibar I quickly learned that patience and a willingness to rearrange would be the key approaches to the research. It also struck me how much information seemed to come to me randomly rather than being sought out by me. Retrospectively, the randomness in fact meant that instead of imposing my assumptions about *qasida*, I experienced local *qasida* and *maulidi* culture myself and let local discourses and people be the guide. Furthermore I could not have recognised 'random' bits of information without the previous immersion in the subject.



Plate 1.03 Recording at a *maulidi*; with Bakathir, August 2008.

My positionality and identity certainly come to bear on the relations with informants and the writing of this thesis (cf. Caplan 2004: 13). My perspective as a young woman is different, as most research done on topics to do with religion in general or religious literature on the East African littoral has so far been conducted by older men.

I am at once an outsider and an insider as I speak Swahili fluently and I am aware of most codes of behaviour in the way of a secondary, parallel socialisation. Also being

Muslim seemed to be an advantage in fieldwork as informants and people in general tend to be more open and generous with their knowledge.⁹ This common faith identity – although the beliefs proper might be different – and the common experiences that this entails undeniably created an initial trust and understanding. Especially fasting together in Ramadan further strengthened this group identity. The same applies to shared living predicaments, e.g. the three-months power-cut during the hottest season of the year.

Being young and a woman might increase this effect as I am perceived as harmless, naïve and uninformed and therefore do not pose a ‘threat’ to them.

The boys and young men of Bakathir were reserved but polite with me from the beginning. Over time they got used to me being there and especially the older ones, Foum, Nassir, Teddy, Othman, and Ayoub became good friends. Everyone at Mtendeni was curious about me from the beginning. Through long *maulidis*, and late night walks home, but even more so the regular rehearsal evenings and travels, they have become *ndugu zangu* ‘my brothers.’



Plate 1.03 Group picture Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni at Zizi la Ng’ombe, 28.12.2011. Photo by Anna Fawcus.

⁹ A male researcher (Islamic studies) once told me of the suspicion he was met with while in Zanzibar that was apparently to do with him not being Muslim.

1.4 THE GENRE

The East African littoral has been a 'contact zone', a place where people from different origins have met, for many centuries. The colonial era brought another dimension to the existing multicultural society and postcolonial times have seen yet another. People and ideas are displaced in this age of ever more rapid globalisation. This gradual accumulation of traditions, religions, cultures and ideas has created a multitude of diasporas significantly influencing politics and society.

1.4.1 Notions of *Qasida*

Given the considerable variety of *qasida* found within urban Zanzibar, notions of what *qasida* actually is differ. However, there are some unifying factors. All of my informants agree that *qasida* are *mashairi yanayosomwa* 'poems that are sung or recited,' i.e. the language is arranged in specific patterns, rhyme and / or the metric rules of classical Swahili poetry. This definition, vague as it might be, conveys one of the key features of *qasida*: they are both oral and written. Foley's 'Voiced Text' category (2002: 39) describes them adequately as written texts that are performed orally and whose reception is exclusively aural.

Far from being limited to *qasida*, all Swahili poetry is supposed to be sung, as stated by Amri Abedi (1954: 1): 'Kama shairi haliimbiki halina maana.' (If a poem is not sung or cannot be sung, it has no meaning.)¹⁰ Lambert examines the implications of the musical intonation on the text:

At first he (the average European) finds the rhyming system generally unsatisfying, the use of archaisms and borrowed words when modern Swahili words would fit as well somewhat grandiloquent or ostentatious, the juggling with constructions inartistic and the frequent sacrifice of the prosaic to the rhythmic accent most disturbing. This last, however, will not bother him for long if he remembers that Swahili poetry is primarily intended to be sung, not read or recited. European poetry, primarily intended to be read, can be equally disturbing when it is set to music which upsets the prosodic rhythm. (1954:6)

¹⁰ Hichens remarks on the performative aspects of *tendi* saying that they 'are designed for public performance. [...] They are intended to be sung aloud by one or more poets or minstrels, to be accompaniment of an orchestra, in the presence of an audience.' He continues to compare them to plays and operas (1962).

The spectrum ranges from Bakathir's very fixed version of *qasida* to Msolopa's flexible approach.

With Bakathir the notion of *qasida* is that of a pre-composed poem, that is performed from beginning to end as it is written down, and therefore fixed, in Ibrahim's book. The degree of flexibility is very low: almost no alterations are made to the *qasidas* except for the insertion of names (bride and groom, female relatives) into slots specifically intended for this purpose. It is even true for the bipartite structure of many of their *qasidas*, where the second parts are not randomly selected but constitute rhythm-centred variations on the theme of the first part. The same style is sought to be recreated in every performance thus keeping alive a tradition that is said to have been handed down from their predecessors since time immemorial. A video from the beginning of the 1990s does confirm this. How far back this essentially similar style goes back is impossible to tell, but it is probably unchanged at least since the 1960s.

With Bakathir authorship is half-known; it is recorded in Ibrahim's book but neither does he know the composer on the spot nor do the younger performers know at all when asked. They see themselves and are perceived as guardians of tradition and a few of their *qasidas* and invocations that structure *maulidis* – the 'Alawī canon – are the prevailing models for all *maulidi ya dufu* in Zanzibar. Instrumentation is strictly limited to *madufu*, or even non-existent at mosques where they perform a capella. Their approach is text-centred and conservative in every aspect. Their time-planning is strictly oriented at prayer times. Punctuality, discipline and immaculate appearance are part of their performance and is mirrored in their overall style of *maulidi* (e.g. neat seating arrangements and dress) and the individual *qasidas*.

At the other end of the spectrum are Msolopa's mixed group with a much more flexible approach. While they still wear white *kanzu* and the girls *sare*, as all group members are much older there is not so much emphasis on punctuality and cleanliness. This extends to all matters in *maulidi* performances as well. Their seating arrangements are more cluster-like, with the drummers in one cluster and singers loosely grouped. The choice of *qasidas* is also much less restricted, limited only by the first *qasida* and the one after *kiyama*. Within the *qasida* slots, too, rather than following a single *qasida* with stanzas and a refrain through, portions of pre-composed poems are recombined on the spot by the lead singer.

This is similar to the arrangement of *qasidas* within a *Maulidi ya Homu dahala*, which always starts with the same *qasida* and then gradually increases in flexibility as well as volume and speed. Here, possible sequences are limited but not the number of repetitions or the duration of free play.

Generally one can say that Bakathir is on the methodic and sober end of a spectrum that varies between the relative importance of text, music, dancing, set-up, formality, improvisation, and tradition.

The three poles around which all groups situate themselves are culture, religion, and entertainment; each group has some aspect of all three but the dominance of the factors varies. It is a constant balancing of conveying information and the affective qualities of music and poetry. Or as Barber says 'text fixes [and how] performance animates' (2003:324).

1.4.2 The Rise of the Genre

From the mid-1990s onward the genre of *maulidi/qasida* has seen a rise. Even though it has been part of the wedding celebrations for decades, the socio-cultural changes that have taken place have contributed greatly to its current popularity.

The opening of Zanzibar since the early 1990s has led to economic changes: whereas before the main source of income was the production of cloves and copra, Zanzibar became a tourist destination and to a lesser degree resumed its role as trading point. Growing wealth and development went along with the influx of mainlanders, expatriates and tourists. It is generally believed that Zanzibaris have profited very little from the tourist industry. This sentiment is mirrored in a feeling of marginality in Tanzania,¹¹ the world, and even in Zanzibar where foreigners and mainlanders control the big businesses. On the other hand technological innovations, namely the (mobile) phone and the internet have connected Zanzibar with the world, and especially with their relatives in the Gulf who have also been claiming back property and *cheo* 'rank, status.' All these developments have led to a stronger connection with the Gulf and consequently the Muslim Umma and

¹¹ This was expressed particularly during the three-months power cut from December 2009 to March 2010. The topic has recently come into the focus again leading to intense public discussions on the nature of the *Muungano* 'union,' whether it would be dissolved and how this could be achieved.

identity. Loimeier attributes the spread of the hijab or even the *niqab* 'veil' to the influence of a new Muslim movements of reform (*watu wa bidaa*) who, from the early 1980s, 'started to develop in Zanzibar and became particularly active in *da'wah*, the construction of mosques and the mobilisation of Muslim women' (Loimeier 2009: 125). However, he concedes that veiling is a more complex issue and might not be religiously motivated (Loimeier 2009: 125).

The growing economic and socio-cultural ties to *Arabuni* 'the Gulf' and *Umanga* 'Oman' have brought in products and fashions from that part of the world. When I first came to Zanzibar in 1995 unmarried girls and women would wear loose but colourful clothes with a headscarf (in the 1960s and 70s many women would not wear a headscarf, but sleeveless shirts and short skirts), only older women wore the traditional Swahili *buibui*, which had just started to be replaced by the easier to wear *abaya* 'coat-style overcoat.' By about 2000 even young girls wore *buibui* (*abaya*-style) which had then almost completely replaced the traditional *buibui*. From about 2005 the *niqab* is an additional fashion accessory that had before been extremely rare and associated with illegitimate pregnancies and even prostitution. Today any decent girl can wear *niqab*, or *kininja* 'small ninja' as it is often called. Even the veiling fashions themselves reflect to a certain degree the complex motivations behind them. They range from glittering and/or very tight or see-through *buibui* with elaborate styles of tying the colourful or even more glittering scarves to the sedate and 'pious' style of a simple *buibui* paired with a long scarf. The type of *niqab* can also hint at why it is worn: if it is on top of the simple, wide style it adds to the 'piety' whereas the small embroidered *niqab* that completes the flashy look is often a fashion accessory and a sunscreen that prevents the face from darkening.

Veiling is a very visible phenomenon and has many parallels to *qasida*: both are long-established local Islamic cultural expressions that have undergone dramatic outward changes and modernisation through the connection with the Gulf area but that remain intrinsically Zanzibari and that even help to assert this identity as opposed to mainlanders and foreigners. What has happened to the veil reveals both the intentions behind it and its aesthetic quality as such. The process of appropriation has also been described as 'cultural authentication,' a concept that is defined as 'the process of assimilating an artefact or idea external to a culture by

accommodative change into a valued indigenous object or idea' (Erekosima & Eicher 1980: 83). Of the four levels according to the degree of 'cultural authentication' (selection, characterisation, incorporation and transformation) both *qasida* and the veiling have been incorporated and transformed as they were amalgamated into existing concepts of the same cultural practices.

Despite attacks on the practice of *maulidi* by the *Anṣār al-Sunna* movement, notably by Nassor Bachu, 'the ritual has retained its popularity. *Maulidi* celebrations have indeed acquired numerous expressions in Zanzibar and have come to be celebrated not only in the 'proper' context of the Prophet's birthday, but on many different occasions throughout the year, such as parents' day, school festivals, or marriage ceremonies. *Maulidi* has also become an integral part of Islamic education and every major *madrassa* and school celebrated its own *maulidi*' (Loimeier 2009: 130-131) When they realised that their polemics were not successful, they started to retaliate and 'adopted a more conciliatory approach' (Loimeier 2009: 131).

From about the mid-1990s *Bongo Flava*¹² has replaced *Muziki wa Dansi*,¹³ while *qasida* has in a way replaced itself and partly other genres, e.g. *Rusha Roho*, by incorporating elements¹⁴ from these other local genres – like *Rusha Roho*, *taarab*, *ngoma*,¹⁵ etc.,– but also by amalgamating translocal stylistic components – most audibly Indonesian *modern kasida* as well as *naṣīd* and *madīḥ* from the Arabian Peninsula.

These new features have contributed to a modernisation of *qasida*. The social changes described above have led to an Islamisation, by which I mean the

¹² The term *Bongo Flava* will be used to encompass all Tanzanian *Flavas*, including Zenji 'Zanzibari' Flava. See also 7.3.

¹³ *Muziki wa dansi* is a genre of guitar-based dance music that emerged in the urban centres of Tanzania during the 1930s. For more information see Graebner (2006: 418-422).

¹⁴ Some of these elements are: the bipartite structure, the thematic broadening to more celebratory lyrics, rhythms and medleying, textual phrases, etc. Each of these elements will be described and discussed in more detail in the performance, text, and intertext and context chapters.

¹⁵ *Ngoma* literally means 'drum' and by extension the term refers to drum-based regional traditional dances with dramatical and competitive features. They are popular all over East Africa and have been a influential force in popular music and is 'regarded as the basis of Tanzanian music' (Perullo 2011: 366).

ostentatious occurrence of behaviour and commodities marked as 'Islamic' or 'Arabic.' Along with the shift to more Swahili texts, the modernisation of *qasida* and the islamisation of Zanzibari society have led to a popularisation of its performances. Today it is considered both auspicious and fashionable to have a *maulidi* for a wedding, rather than a *taarab*, *kidumbak*, *rusha roho* or even *beni*.¹⁶ This popularisation in turn created a demand for commercial recordings that are now ubiquitous. This market situation has paved the way for more musical and performative experimentation which again created a greater demand.

What has happened to *qasida* as a genre over the last decade can be described as a web of mutual influences between two poles: the Islamisation of society and commodification of Islam on one side with the modernisation, popularisation, and commercialisation of *qasida* on the other side.

The framing and nesting in *maulidi* is another factor that allows youths to modernise the genre by filling the *qasida*-slots with musically, textually, or performatively innovative styles. Usually, only one of these, i.e. either music or text or performance style would have 'modern' elements, thus playing on the genre boundaries. This playing with the familiar and the new, allows them to be at the same time provocative and conventional. What constitutes the right balance between these two, in other words where the boundary of acceptability lies, is a very contentious issue. The variety of viewpoints is expressed in the variety of *qasida*-styles currently performed in Zanzibar. Whether they will eventually move in one direction, or whether there will be a schism between traditionalists and innovators remains to be seen.

¹⁶ Musical styles performed at weddings and other occasions. See glossary.

1.5 RITUAL, POETRY & ART

In the following I will clarify what I mean by some of the terms recurring throughout this thesis, as well as outlining some underlying thoughts on poetry and art and their analysis. By no means do I intend to provide definitive explanations of these terms, rather I seek to clarify their use as analytical tools. The terms pertaining to religion and ritual stem from anthropology while notions of literature and art derive from the field of Oral Literature.

The terms 'religious/sacred' and 'profane/secular' are contentious and a contentious binary. While the dichotomy was considered by Durkheim (1912) to be universal and central to religion, Goody criticised this theory and noted that the concepts did not exist in many societies and was therefore not universal. He suggests that, if they do exist, profane and sacred are qualities that can only be defined by the local society. However this does not imply the possibility to decide definitively for any action whether it is profane or sacred. To follow the perspective of the acting person(s) includes to accept overlapping and grey areas (1961: 159). As we have seen above (1.2) this is precisely the situation for Zanzibari *qasida*: the local discourse distinguishes the two concepts but *qasida* seems to fall in one of the grey areas, when it is supposed to be religious. See also below 2.5.

Relevant to the discussion of performance (of *maulidi*) are ceremony, ritual and cult. Ceremony is a formalised action with social meaning, it is indicative. Ritual is a formalised action with an outcome (e.g. rite de passage), which makes it transformative. Cult is a formalised action for religious contexts, it can also be called liturgy and is transcendental. *Maulidi* could be classified into each of these three categories of formalised action depending on context and speaker. Whereas wedding *maulidi* tend toward to the ritual, *maulidi ya Mtume* stress the religious element. In addition, all *maulidi* ceremonies have a social meaning in that they bring together certain groups of people (e.g. two families or a neighbourhood) in a conventional setting.

According to Victor Turner liminality is a key feature of ritual. Liminality engenders *communitas*, the dissolution of an existing order and the freedom to imagine and

establish a new order. Therefore, rituals are a 'hotbed of cultural creativity' (Grimes 2000: 271) and a power for social change.

As Askew describes for women in *taarab*,

'Performance is often considered liminal practice, an activity set off from daily affairs, an "extra-ordinary" event. While I prefer to view performance as fully incorporated within and not categorically distinct from ordinary social life, I do not dispute its potential for evoking change. Like Anthony Seeger, I seek to "examine the way music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes" (Seeger 1987: xiii–xiv) not merely show how it reflects these relationships and processes. The nature of the relationship between forms of cultural expression and the society that produces them is one of reciprocal determination. The position of women relative to men along the Swahili Coast underwent a striking transformation resulting in a loss of female autonomy. Musical practice offers evidence of this process, but equally importantly, it constitutes a means through which Swahili women have reclaimed and are in the process of reclaiming some of their lost autonomy. Women sing their praises, their sorrows, and their politics.'

(1999: 93)

The same is for *qasida* and youth: the genre is deeply rooted in Zanzibari Islamic culture, but at the same time it is a powerful means for young men and women to articulate their views, creatively transform *qasida* and make it relevant today (see especially chapter 7).

Another central factor in performance is singing. Swahili differentiates between *kuimba* 'sing' and *kusoma* 'read, recite,' however, the distinction is not only between different vocal styles¹⁷ but also determined by the content of what is sung: While *kuimba* is used for secular songs, *kusoma* is used for *qasida*. The local terms therefore not necessarily reflect the style of utterance but rather the type of text and its context. However, *qasidas* can be called songs in English if the definition of song (as the act of singing and as a musical entity), it is the conscious shaping of human utterances by use of the singing voice. The human singing voice, by a preference for certain frequencies, has a physiological basis different from that of the speaking voice.

The term genre has already been used frequently above and will recur throughout the thesis. Classifying literature is a problematic task as it involves many complexities and controversies (Finnegan 1992: 135). In the last decades academic literature has questioned the idea of universal 'pure' types and fixity, rather the

¹⁷ See also 4.4.2 for *kuimba*, *kusoma*, and *kughani* in *qasida* texts.

dynamics of performance and practice have been stressed, as well as expectations and how they are realised and played upon. One of the arising questions is the appropriate way of presentation, that allows for comparisons or the communication with outsiders (Finnegan 1992: 138) in the sense of creating an entextualisation (Barber 2003: 325-326). The use of local terminology can be an effective way of evading presuppositions roused by European terms. But this brings along other problems. Most importantly, it complicates cross-cultural comparisons and it is not necessarily fully coherent or uncontroversial. Also, not all conventions of verbal art are automatically consciously recognised and articulated (Finnegan 1992: 138-139).

The traditional labelling of genres or of other differentiations, whether by ourselves or others, only represent one aspect of reality. (Finnegan 1992: 157)

Talking of genres means classifying subgroups under an overarching general form, an art of language or literature. As the notion of literature varies, so does the notion and emphasis on the meaning and importance of 'genre' according to who (e.g. critics, writers, practitioners, anthropologists) discusses it, and to their specific background and intent. All approaches struggle with the dilemma of reconciling general terms to facilitate translation and comparative understanding with the representation of specificity (Finnegan 1992: 135-136). This is why I use a combination of universal (English) terminology and classical Greek and Roman as well as Swahili and Arabic terms, present as much original material as possible, and provide description and contextualisation.

When thinking of appropriate terms for classification, ideas of boundaries – like speech and song, oral and written, prose and poetry – need to be relativized in the light of cross-cultural comparisons. According to Finnegan (1992: 142-146) some of the most obvious criteria, that overlap and need to be combined in practice, are: stylistic or formal (degree of musicality, suprasegmental features of language: accent, stress, tone etc.); subject matter; occasion, role and context; performance characteristics: extralinguistic features (gestures, mimics) and paralinguistic features (setting, music); local terminologies and taxonomies; and specifics of time, place and environment.

Depending on which criteria are stressed, these guidelines allow for conflicting but equally tenable classifications (Finnegan 1992: 145). This thesis therefore represents one of many possible assembling and examination of the findings.

Qasida, as a genre is neither strictly oral nor strictly written. As such, specific problems arise as to its representation. Closer to oral literature on the spectrum these problems include the fluid and unstable nature of oral literature.

Secondly, its dependence on extra- and paralinguistic features; and thus, the interdisciplinary nature of oral literature especially, as in the case of *qasida*, when it is closely associated with music, history, and religion. This makes the study of oral literature much more conspicuous with other disciplines than 'ordinary' literary studies. The sense of context is much stronger in oral literature than in written literature, and as opposed to the decontextualisation arising out of its representation in the media.

And lastly, the relative imperceptibility of shape, form, and structure. Yet, the concept of genre is still valid and useful as it provides 'pointers to regularities and continuities in verbal expression' (Finnegan 1992: 145-146). 'Together with the disagreement artists and audiences reflects the change and diversity in culture in general and, particularly, in literature' (Finnegan 1992: 157), as we can see in the discourses on *qasida* (see 2.5). The performative aspect is not only an advantage to the classification of oral literature but it is an indispensable part. Thus, it must also be an indispensable and intrinsic part of any interpretation of oral literature, which makes chapters 3 and 4 complimentary and the core of the thesis.

Ambiguity, incongruences and absurdity are intrinsic features of many genres of literature. Poetry may be defined not only by specific formal features and its affective nature but also as a parallel and potentially subversive discourse as has been shown by Abu-Lughod (1986) for *ghinnawa*. A description of *qasida* must do justice to both the textual and performative dimensions as well as intertextual and intercultural relations. To place the genre in its literary, social and historical context will reveal its integration – and the role of poetry in general – into ritual and everyday life.

The multidisciplinary approach joins methods from several areas. The basis is the establishment of a corpus of recordings and transcriptions.

The literary analysis will combine hermeneutics and poetics – that is, philological, allegoric and historical-hermeneutic interpretation. A three-way approach to text: from the inside, from the outside, and – to a much lesser degree – creative. Close

reading for the texts which had to be constructed at first using the written and aural versions for transcripts, followed by translation and textual analyses.

This is complemented by the anthropological methods of participant observation, qualitative interviews and description. Even though I use these tools, methods and modes of interpretation, this is not an anthropological or sociological study. The literary-aesthetic aspects of *qasida* are at the core of this thesis.

Through this combination I hope to find a balanced analysis that does justice both to the socio-cultural role or 'message' of *qasida* and their aesthetic or literary value.

The operation of genres within specific contexts leads the discussion to concentrate not upon the classification of genres solely according to formal features but rather to consider the function, focus and intent of different kinds of utterance. This permits a more flexible and dynamic account of what writers and speakers are *doing* when they write and speak in particular forms and contexts. The focus upon individual communicative acts is complemented by an attentiveness to the social location of different genres. (Furniss 1996:2)

Meaning is not a category per se inherent in a literary work, but ascribed to it only in a communicatory process (Bauer 1998:11). This is why an analysis based solely on text when there is a temporal and/or cultural distance is not only not scientific but also anachronistic and ego-/Eurocentric (Bauer 1998:13-14).

Art is seen as cultural practice:

'Practice as process of producing and receiving artwork, practices of an artwork as constitutive of ideology, and practices that are constrained by other social and particularly economic practices.' (Caton 1990: 250)

In my analysis I want to show all three dimensions: firstly the composition, transmission and reception, secondly the ideology or worldview expressed in the texts themselves and in discourses about *qasida*, and lastly the relation of *qasida* to other forms of cultural production.

The idea of art as an object is misleading as there is a continuum stretching from its being a creative process to its being a perfected product (end product of process). This processual character is much more obvious in oral literatures and this is to a certain extent true for *qasida*, much depending on the group background. Therefore the aesthetic appreciation is based upon a poem's reception at a certain point on this continuum (Caton 1990: 251). This processual nature of artworks and their reception is also expressed in Bakhtin's (1986) idea of the genre as conventional practice. He sees genres not as categories of texts but of speech

activities of practices. According to him these speech acts have an 'inner' or thematic orientation and an 'outer' or pragmatic, contextual orientation. This orientation to distinct concepts of reception is especially complex and rich in genres in oral traditions.

The term conventional practice is also fruitful for a description of genre systems. As various sorts of practices we can better understand the interrelationship of genres. Caton proposes the following parameters or characteristic elements: composition, spatiotemporal distance between poet and audience, location within social rituals, reference to historical events, and intratextual vs. intertextual dialogue in order to conceptualise the system of genres along a continuum of cultural practices (1990: 256-260).

Cultural practices are per se communal practices and therefore accumulate and dismiss specific elements over time. Bhabha's concept of hybridity is useful here: 'collective memory is always the site of the hybridity of histories and the displacement of narratives [...] the ambivalence of cultural difference: it is the articulation through incommensurability that structures all narratives of identification, and all acts of cultural translation' (1994: 169).

Qasida is a 'hybrid' genre as it merges Arab-Islamic poetic and musical elements with East African Bantu ones. This process, however, is the century-old experience of Swahili culture which is intrinsically a hybrid one (Mazrui calls it 'triple heritage' 1986). If we compare this to languages a hybrid would correspond to a pidgin with super- and substratum as well as general pidgin strategies. Over time this pidgin develops into a complex Creole that has native speakers to whom this is not a hybrid but a simple reality. Similarly, *qasida* has Arabic music and poetry as a kind of super-stratum (or lexifier) and local musics and literary styles as substratum. These have been amalgamated into a new whole, which has become a distinctive Swahili *qasida* style. Recently this has integrated new elements into it akin to loanwords, some of which might still be recognised as such and others have become so established that they are no longer perceived as foreign elements. The notion of hybridity is relevant throughout the thesis, as it is the underlying process to all dimensions of *qasida/maulidi*: its historical development and the resulting diversity, the texts themselves that resonate with a multitude of other texts, and visibly in its current reincarnations in the media.

While terms, theories and models – such as the above described – can be valid conceptualisations of reality, their discourses must be tested, qualified, and supplemented for each tradition, each genre, each text. Every poem has something uniquely its own that no paradigm can reveal. Therefore my literary analysis seeks to approach each *qasida* with respect to its special mystery (adapted from Ball 1999:102).

One way of capturing this dimension is the addition of photographs to the above mentioned research methods. Predominantly, they serve a documentary and illustrative purpose and thus support the textual description. As such they represent certain aspects of *maulidi* performances but they also show social relationships and serve as souvenir. Most of the images are not staged, they were taken during performances. Generally, Zanzibaris are happy to be photographed, only once in a private house I was asked not to photograph the women of the family. In the halls, there is also usually a professional photographer (and a cameraman) hired by the hosts to take pictures of the audience and the bride. Taking pictures is therefore considered a part of *maulidi*. My photographs try to show both overviews of the scene as well as small-scale segments such as portraits of the performers and performance props (drums, incense burners, books). Audience participation and *Maulidi ya Homu* are extraordinarily stunning subjects, which together with the still-life and portrait images constitute the second purpose: beauty. Some of these images aestheticise and romanticise what is happening, however, this is exactly what *qasida* does as well: it is, after all, an aesthetically appealing performance of poetry that idealises Muhammad. Therefore, the images render another dimension of *qasida* and *maulidi*. But they are also a very personal expressive mode of interpretation.

1.6 THESIS STRUCTURE

Due to the linear manner of constructing a narrative on paper, the organisation of this thesis presents my observations on *qasida* in this way.

Just as it was not written in the presented sequence, it could well be represented and read differently. Indeed, the chapter and subchapters are rather like a *Maulidi ya Homu dahala*: there are elements intended for a slow beginning, elements that fit well in the middle, and elements that are suitable for the fast and intense climax at the end.

The structure of this thesis is intentionally designed for each chapter to build upon the previous, as one way of writing it and allowing people not familiar with *qasida* to read about it.

As we have seen above there is little academic literature around the topic of Zanzibari *qasidas* and few on the topic itself. This paucity of previous works makes extensive descriptions necessary as a first step. However, that is not enough, an analysis of the material, contextualisation and its relevance regarding larger issues are central to this thesis.

After the above general introduction to the genre *qasida*, its place and rise in Zanzibar, chapter 2 will provide more information on the people involved in *qasida*, on the groups, their *madrasas*, affiliation to Sufi brotherhoods, and the transmission of knowledge within the framework of Islamic education in Zanzibar.

When the background of *qasida* production is set, I will describe and analyse three distinct levels of *qasida*-qualities: the extra-textual level which looks at performance in chapter 3, the textual level which examines the style of language in chapter 4, inspirations, allusions and sources of *qasida* compositions in chapter 6, and lastly *qasida* in the urban landscape in chapter 7. Although I separate these aspects of *qasida* I hope continually to draw connections between the three levels and illustrate how they interact in the creation of a literary genre.

Thus, chapter 3, as a continuation of the discussion in the previous chapter on people and groups, focuses on the performers and to a lesser degree the audiences, and then goes on to describe what they do, where, when, for which occasions and

with which motivations, and how. It also relates back to the introduction setting out the types and the historical evolvement of *maulidi* celebrations.

Together with these essential characteristics of *maulidi* performances, chapter 4 on the textual aspects of *qasida* forms the core of this thesis. Chapter 4 aims to portray a matrix of the textual features found in Zanzibari *qasida* along four continua: the range of topics, form and prosody, structure, and style and diction. All these exist as ranges of options between conventional and innovative poles: The traditional triad of topics tackled in *qasida* is praise of the Prophet, supplications and congratulations, and advice while the innovative compositions include the enjoyment of life and a range of current issues. The poles of form and prosody range from the strict rules of the classical metrical poems to the freer *vugo*-type. Structurally, the *shairi*-type with stanzas and a refrain is the more prevalent one, albeit its bipartite version, which has a *shairi*-type beginning and a second faster part, is already halfway to the antipodal mosaic *qasida*, which is a combination of stanzas, refrains and musical themes of a number of compositions. The distinction between more conventional and more innovative language is much vaguer, which is why the characteristics are described together in a single section. This is supplemented with a portrayal of the vast range of rhetorical figures and other strategies of patterning language.

While chapters 3 and 4 intend to identify and analyse the essential features of *qasida*, chapter 5 illustrates how these work together in whole *qasidas* by presenting examples of classical, conventional, and innovative *qasidas*, as well as *Maulidi ya Homu* tesserae. In turn, how *qasida* and *Mawlid* texts come together in *maulidi* performances was already shown in chapter 2.

Another aspect of the texts, their sources and inter-textual relations both within *qasidas* and with other local and trans-local genres will be described in chapter 6, which also discusses the notions of borrowing and authorship briefly.

The last chapter comes back to the location of *qasida*, more specifically its place in the urban landscape. The ubiquity of *qasida* builds on the rise of the genre in recent years but here expands on the new contexts of *qasida* through recording and dissemination in the media. Mediation, especially in the context of mobile phones and music videos, has contributed to the transformation of *qasida* itself and notions of it. The surprising parallels with *Bongo Flava* in this context are telling about

modes of cultural and literary production and consumption in contemporary urban Zanzibar and especially the role of youths as agents of change as well as preservers of tradition.

The conclusion will bring together the main arguments of the thesis as well as assess the current condition of *qasida*, and suggest opportunities for further research.

Chapter Two

***Maulidi* Groups & Islamic Education**



The historical formation and current state of Islamic education is immensely important for the contextualisation of *qasida*. Firstly, because the history of *maulidi/qasida* is inextricably intertwined with the history of Islamic education and the role of individual scholars and Sufi brotherhoods within that formation. Secondly, because today virtually every Muslim child receives some form of Islamic education, of which the singing of *qasida* is an integral part, for teaching Islamic tenets and history, for group cohesion, for recreation and enjoyment. This is the basis for the establishment of *maulidi* groups at *madrasas*.

The fact that the groups are formed from members of a *madrasa* and belong to it, is one of the key elements in defining the genre. Although it is not wholly exclusive, one way of delineating the boundaries is to say that *qasidas* are songs sung by *madrasa* groups. In other words, just as important as what is said (content) and how (form, style) is who it is performed by. This is why the differences between groups have ramifications for the nature of their performances and of the *qasidas*. These 'poorest boundaries' of the genre, however, are indeed poor, as this description of *qasida* by no means implies that songs sung by individuals at home or in the neighbourhood are not *qasida*. This understanding of *qasida* as a genre is further complicated by making recordings and dissemination through various media in recent years, for which see especially chapter 7.

The variety among the groups that perform *qasida* in Zanzibar is great. Their different backgrounds and perspectives can be characterised by the following features: affiliation to a Sufi brotherhood, education, social status, and location within Zanzibar Town (which is associated with a whole set of other cultural practices). In the local discourse these concepts often appear in binary opposites, e.g. Stone Town vs. Ng'ambo, educated vs. non-educated etc. Some of these binaries are associated with each other, e.g. Stone Town is seen as the domain of the educated, upper-class elite traditionally lead by Alawī scholars. Whether these simple dichotomies are useful in describing the groups is questionable. However, it says something of the performers' strategies of identifying in opposition to others.

Each group competes with its own style and appeals to different audiences. Many groups claim to do the ‘original’ or ‘real’ thing relating to both tradition and skill of performance.

Just like their backgrounds, the roles of *madrasas* and *qasida* groups are manifold. They serve as school (religious and secular education), nursery, community centre, family and/or neighbourhood association, choir, Hausmusik, and a means of experiencing and expressing religiosity.

The groups I have worked with portray the complexity of the *qasida* scene that far exceeds the simple binaries mentioned above. Similar to the features of performance (in the next chapter) and of texts (in chapter 4), they are not absolute categories but exist on a continuum, which in turn come together with other continua in the creation of the multidimensional matrix of the qualities of *qasida*.

2.1 STONE TOWN VS. NG'AMBO

Perhaps the most prominent of the dichotomies is the opposition between Stone Town and Ng'ambo.¹⁸ Stone Town is seen as more Arabic, Ng'ambo as more African. Clearly this concept employs location as a cultural metaphor which is mirrored in the word *utamaduni* 'urbane culture, way of life' but also means 'refinement, good taste.' It is derived from the Arabic root m-d-n 'town' and thus corresponds to the term civilisation. A similar division is made in other genres, e.g. in *taarab* the *Nadi Ikhwani Safaa* is associated with Stone Town and the *Culture Musical Club* with Ng'ambo (pers. comm. Werner Graebner, September 2008). While a clear-cut distinction is of course not entirely tenable the locally perceived difference is also real. The Stone Town outlook is to be the guardian of tradition, an elite, religious authority that protects orthodox Islam. The Madrasat an-Nour (Bakathir) together with Miskiti Barza and Gibreel and a couple of scholars form this traditionalist set. Whether the other groups contrast their own role as opposite to that and see themselves as modernist or avant-garde remains to be explored.

A difference between Stone Town and Ng'ambo really exists but the variety within Ng'ambo is just as great. The following outline of some of the distinguishing parameters and accounts on 'my' groups show these differences. I will also propose a typology of *qasida* groups that exist in Zanzibar. The group descriptions and portraits of some individuals will also reveal their personalities and their manifold motivations in participating in *maulidi*.

The dominance of the Stone Town elite in political, economic and religious matters is a heritage from pre-Revolutionary times. In the *maulidi* sphere an example is the *milad al-nabi* association (registered [...] 1962) in order "'to celebrate annually the *milad al-nabi*," [that] reflected the paramount position of Arab and Indian elites' (Loimeier 2009: 29). After 1964, the revolutionaries exercised their new power touching many aspects of cultural life; perceived 'Arab' activities were either banned or became state-controlled. As was the case for *maulidi* celebrations, be they private or public, they had to be approved by the Ministry of Information (Loimeier 2009: 54).

¹⁸ Lit. 'beyond, on the other side' as Stone Town used to be separated from the rest of town by a creek. This is where former slaves settled. Today, Ng'ambo designates the newer parts of town where the poor migrants from rural areas live. It has also come to signify a whole set of (other) cultural practices.

2.2 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (*TARIQA*¹⁹)

There are numerous Sufi brotherhoods throughout the Muslim world that seek to balance dry theology with a mystical experience. The main *turuq* on the Swahili coast are the Shādhiliyya, the Qādiriyya, the ʿAlawiyya and the Rifāʿiyya.

Affiliation to a certain *tariqa* (by the fact that their founder or current director was a member) is another feature that seems to distinguish the groups at first sight. However, due to the central role of the Sufi brotherhood in the Islamisation of the Swahili coast or the Swahilisation of Islam in East Africa, Swahili Islam is itself inherently Sufi. Therefore even if a *madrasa* is not formally affiliated to a *tariqa* their practices differ very little from those that are. The *tariqas*, however, do stand for a tradition of learning and of spirituality which has a high prestige. They also provide transnational links: the ʿAlawiyya (Madrasat al-Nour) to the Comoros, the Haḍramawt and to Indonesia, and the Shādhiliyya to Kilwa (Msolopa).

However, the *maulidi* and the *qasidas* performed during the ceremony do not differ much across *tariqas*; and the *madrasas* that are not formally affiliated to any do just the same.

The scholarly tradition of the ʿAlawiyya has been the most authoritative in the establishment of Islamic education in the town centres along the Swahili coast. As such they were instrumental in shaping the Swahili *maulidi* and *qasida* culture.

Notwithstanding appearances, the ʿAlawiyya rather than a *tariqa* is a ‘union of scholars of Haḍramī origin’ (Loimeier 2009: 93) who share a common ancestry as descendants of the Prophet (*sayyids*), fittingly called a ‘family order’ by Freitag (2003: 91). From the late 19th century up to the revolution in 1964, these ʿAlawī families dominated Islamic scholarship on the island and beyond through a network of relationships (Bang 2003, especially 199-201). During this time, the vast majority of learned Zanzibari had studied in an ʿAlawī *madrasa*.²⁰

¹⁹ Note the Swahili spelling.

²⁰ ‘Their influence was so pervasive that a contemporary Kenyan religious scholar, Abdilahi Nassir, compared the ʿAlawī tradition of education with the British system and added that students educated within the ʿAlawī tradition of Islamic learning wore the “same college tie.”’ (Loimeier 2009: 93)

ʿAlawī families observed several rituals, comparable to the practices of the Sufi brotherhoods, among which was the celebration of the *mawlid al-nabī*. Their genealogical links to the Prophet made his veneration during the *mawlid* the most important communal ritual (Bang 2003: 18-20, 148-150 and Loimeier 2009: 93-94).

ʿAlawī scholars played a critical role in the opening up of Islamic education to many: They broadened the spectrum of the canon of texts, started to translate texts into Kiswahili, and stressed disciplines such as *fiqh* [Islamic Jurisprudence] that had been less prominent on the East African coast before the 1860s. They abandoned the elitist style of access to education as had been carried out by the religious establishment by founding of new schools, such as *Madrasat Ba Kathir*. Whereas the Qādiriyya had opened up Islamic rituals with their communal *dhikr*, the ʿAlawiyya moved yet further. Their efforts in the sphere of education were so fruitful that soon Zanzibar was known as ‘the *qibla*’ (point of orientation) for education in East Africa (*al-Falaq*, 20 May 1939; cited after Loimeier 2009: 94).

2.3 TRANSMISSION

Loimeier describes the teaching in *madrasas* in the late 19th and early 20th century as a process of increasing formalisation with new *madrasas* being established and the development of a canon of texts to be taught in an increasingly structured curriculum (2009: 166-173). At the beginning of every child's *madrasa* education is the Arabic alphabet and then the *juz' 'amma* (suras 78-114)²¹ and Surat al-Fātiḥa. He adds that '[s]imultaneously, the students would learn poems (*qaṣā'id*), in particular poems connected with the *mawlid al-nabī*, a tradition cultivated by the Qur'ānic schools in East Africa since the late 19th century.' (Loimeier 2009: 166). These texts were a significant part of Qur'ānic school learning as the readings of *maulidis* and the poems connected with this event played a central role in the East African Islamic traditions. Among these texts al-Būṣīrī's *burda* and Barzanjī's *mawlid al-nabī* were most widely taught and read (Loimeier 2009: 191-192).

Of the Arabic *mawlid* and *qasida* texts Loimeier mentions²² only a few are taught today and only a few more continue to be performed. As he concedes himself: 'Although the celebration of the *mawlid al-nabī* is still very important in Zanzibar nowadays, at least as part of 'popular culture,' it is not taught any more as part of the formal syllabus in IRI [Islamic Religious Instruction]' (2009: 209). The texts he lists as being widely known and taught are: the *Mawlid Barzanji*, al-Būṣīrī's *burda*, *al-Kawkab al-witriyya* and *Mawlid Ḥabshī*; and for *sīra*: *khulāṣat nūr al-yaqīn fī sīrat sayyid al-mursalīn* (edited by 'Umar 'Abd al-Jabbār, a short version of the *nūr al-yaqīn* by al-Qāḍī 'Iyād) and works in Swahili, such as *Maisha ya Nabii Muhammad* by Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy, which is 'part of the government school syllabus and has been taught in IRI [Islamic Religious Instruction] since 1946' (Loimeier 2009: 209-210).

²¹ The *juz' 'amma* is the most commonly referred to and memorised part of the Qur'an, which is the last of 30. It contains Suras 78 through 114, most of the shortest suras in the Qur'an. 'Amma is generally taught first to children. *Juz' 'amma* is named after the 1st word of the 1st sura (i.e. sura 78) in that *juz'*.

In Zanzibari usage it is referred to as *juzu*. Pamphlets containing it, al-Fātiḥa, and beginner's Arabic writing exercises are sold widely. Once children have completed the *juzu*, *wanaingia msahafu* 'they enter the Qur'an.'

²² For a full list of the texts see Loimeier 2009:182-194.

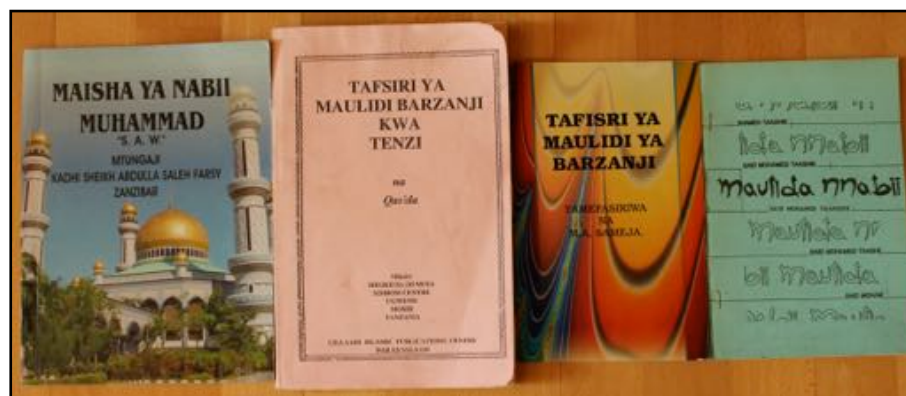


Plate 2.01 Locally available biography of Muhammad by Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy and three translations of the *Barzanji*.

Besides the IRI curriculum taught at government schools, there are a number of private *madrasas* approved by the government that adhere to the state syllabus (Loimeier 2009: 508). He identifies several types according to their temporal organisation, 'ranging from "full-time" Qur'anic schools offering a complete syllabus in Qur'anic studies and teaching in the morning, afternoon and evening; to "part-time" Qur'anic schools and *madaris* where teaching is done in temporal alternation with government school classes, either in the morning or in the evening; and finally one-day Qur'anic schools, where classes take place only on Saturdays and Sundays.' (Loimeier 2009: 509)

From this increasing spatial separation between mosques and *madrasas*, he concludes a loss of sacredness. Because the *madrasas* are not connected to mosques any more, they 'lack the[ir] aura [...] and have turned into pure institutions of learning' (Loimeier 2009: 509). Two notable exceptions to date are Miskiti Ukuta and Forodhani. However, the learning and singing of *qasidas* is still an integral part of *madrasa* education, as is demonstrated by the syllabus designed by the Madrasa Resource Centre (MRC)²³ that regards the singing of *qasidas* among other things as important in the moral and social development of young children: 'Children were encouraged to sing *qasā'id* and to develop melody, singing voice and sense of rhythm.' (Loimeier 2009: 526)

Along the spectrum of *madrasas*, transmission of *qasidas* happens in a range of formal, semiformal and informal ways.

²³ The Madrasa Resource Centre was established in Zanzibar in the 1990s. It is an initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network that provides training and resources for *madrasa* teachers using modern pedagogic concepts. See Loimeier 2009: 521-527.

Bakathir

Bakathir has a fixed semiformal way of admitting new boys in the form of an audition in which all boys who have completed the *juzʿ ʿamma* can volunteer to enter. Those who are accepted will undergo some training that involves learning the *qasidas* the group performs. This is mainly done by repeating after their teacher Ibrahim. Only the small boys meet in the mosque part of the *madrassa* after *isha*. They first copy the one or two stanzas that Ibrahim has written on the board and then go on to sing them over and over again, until they get the words and rhythm right (🎵 Track 2: Rehearsal – Bakathir). In this process each boy creates a small booklet for himself that has all *qasidas* in it. They take them along to performances, so they do not have to know each and everything by heart. This practice also accounts for the high degree of fixity in the songs. However, some parts are not written down, often this is the refrain and always the second part (see chapter 3 and 4), melodies and rhythms. They are also taught to recite the chapters of the *Barzanji* in its distinctive melodic and rhythmic patterns. These evening classes take place for about two months but even after two or three weeks they will go along to *maulidis* and learn by observation and the corrections made during and after performance.

Since Nassir Ali was about 15 years old he has been playing *dufu* with Bakathir. Initially he was attracted to join by the beauty of the songs themselves. His parents supported his choice as they felt it would be a good environment for him and train his voice. Even as a younger boy, he was already singing with Bakathir. In retrospect, he says, that the singing seemed easier at the time, you only had to know the words and ‘go along’ and that playing the drums required a lot of practice, stamina, and patience. Every mistake was obvious at once since you play in a group and the differently sized drums work in conjunction only. Also the teacher would immediately intervene. Later on, in a performance he used to be afraid of making mistakes because then he would *kuharibu shughuli* ‘destroy the celebration.’ All the older boys are very aware of the importance of their role for a successful feast. When they feel someone had a bad day they would argue among themselves. According to two of them, Nassir and Foum, the most common mistake is starting off too fast and vigorous, a *qasida* should start slowly and softly,

and only gradually increase in volume and speed. Another mistake is accentuating in the wrong place, i.e. so that a single drum sounds out.

Msolopa

Msolopa has a considerably less formalised way of teaching. All children in the *madrasa*, be they full-time or part-time students there, learn and regularly sing *qasidas*. Those older students who wish to participate in the *maulidi* group can do so; there is no specific age or level of knowledge requirement, as long as they agree to come along whenever needed they may join. The drummers are recruited from within the *maulidi* group. They learn informally and often on the job from their peers and are corrected by the group leader. The performers themselves claim that ‘once you know, there is no need for practice’ (pers. comm. Mwanamvua, August 2009).

Zamzam

Zamzam trains even less formally. Whenever some group members feel like playing, they do so. The children who are drawn by the music come in, sit down and observe. Once they pick up some words, they will start singing along, integrating more lyrics as they go. The *madufu* are also learned to play by observation and being corrected by other players.

Mtendeni

Due to the great skill and stamina required for *Maulidi ya Homu* dancing, the Mtendeni group practices six evenings a week for about an hour. A typical practice session is described below in 2.4.7 and the introduction of a new *qasida* is illustrated in 6.1.

2.4 THE MAULIDI GROUPS

The *maulidi* groups are referred to by the name of the *madrassa* they are affiliated with. Most members of the groups are recruited from the student body of the *madrassa* and the group leaders are usually teachers there.

While each *maulidi* group has its idiosyncrasies their core qualities are performance and companionship. Companionship within the group is among the qualities that are mentioned by many of the youths. Nassir feels that as they spend so much time together engaging in an activity they all enjoy, they get to know each other intimately and become as one. He says they have a very strong friendship that is almost like having siblings. Ayoub pointed out other *manufaa* 'benefits' of the group dynamic, such as the younger boys admiring the older ones and aspiring to be like them and this gives each of them *heshima*, they appear as role models and have to act accordingly. This has effects on other parts of life as well, even when they have already left the *madrassa* formally, they are still involved with it, which 'keeps them from *upuuzi* "nonsense."'



Plate 2.02 Locations of *Maulidi* Groups and Venues in Zanzibar Town; adapted from Zanzibar Tourist Corporation 1994.

Groups

- A Bakathir
- B Msolopa
- C Tarbiya Islamiya (outside map area)
- D Zamzam
- E Bi Sania
- F Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni

Venues

- 1 Malindi Nursery, Malindi
- 2 Kidutani Nursery, Mkunazini
- (3) Shantimba Hall, Mombasa (outside map area)
- 4 Kwa Shamsu, Marekiti
- 5 Jamaatkhana, Mkunazini
- 6 Sunni Madrasa, Mkunazini
- 7 Haile Selassie Secondary School
- 8 Taasisi, Vuga
- 9 Bwawani Salama Hall
- 10 Bwawani Pemba Bar
- 11 Palace Museum Garden, Forodhani
- 12 Beit Al-Amin, Malindi.

2.4.1 Bakathir – The Traditionalists

As indicated above, the traditionalists are located in Stone Town and only the *maulidi* group of Madrasat al-Nour²⁴ is in this category. Together with the qadhis and imams of Miskiti Barza and Gibreel (the current director of the *madrasa* is also the imam of Mskiti Gibreel) these are Zanzibar's religious authorities. The *tariqa* 'Alawiyya has long dominated the religious discourse on the Swahili coast (including the Comoros)²⁵. The most influential Shāfi'ī '*ulamā*' of the 20th century are almost all members of the elitist *tariqa*: Sayyid Ahmad b Abu Bakr b Sumayt and Abdallah Bakathir, founder of Madrasat an-Nour, among others (Farsy & Pouwels 1989). These last and the author himself, Sheikh Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy, all composed poetry in Arabic and Swahili.

Madrasat an-Nour,²⁶ or as the common name indicates Madrasa Bā Kathīr or simply Bakathir, was founded by Abdallah Bakathir. He had come from Mombasa, Kenya, and started *darsa* at Mskiti Gofu²⁷ sessions when he arrived in Zanzibar around 1890. His lessons were soon so popular the classes had to be organised systematically. In 1909 a new building near his home was set up, where initially the advanced students were taught. Abdallah Bakathir modelled his *madrasa* on the structures he had seen instituted with the educational reforms at the 'Alawiyya centres at Say'ūn and Tarīm in Yemen. 'Like the Riyāḍ in Lamu and the institutions of Ḥaḍramawt, the Bā Kathīr Madrasa offered a systematic education in topics such as *fiqh*, *tafsīr* 'exegesis,' Arabic language and grammar. Students would emerge as qualified *qāḍīs*, Qur'anic commentators, trained in the corpus of Arabic Islamic literature' (Bang 2003: 147). One significant difference from the other *madrasas*, however, was that in addition to the standard Shāfi'ī texts, Ibāḍī *fiqh* was taught to 'reflect the multi-religious realities in Zanzibar' (Bang 2003: 148). This 'non-sectarian approach to religious learning – regardless of *madhhab* or ethnic background [...] is probably the reason why the Madrasa Bā Kathīr never became associated with the social reorganisation which characterised the Riyāḍ in Lamu.' (Bang 2003: 148) In

²⁴ Their own spelling.

²⁵ Bang (2003) describes the 'Alawiyya's network in East Africa and with Yemen.

²⁶ See also Loimeier 2009: 512-521.

²⁷ Mskiti Gofu was built by members of the Āl Jamal al-Layl in the 18th century (Bang 2003: 147).

other words: Bakathir's inclusiveness has been crucial in the *madrasas* continued significance, even after independence.

Until today Bakathir does not allow girls into the *qasida* group and all their songs but one adhere to the rules of Classical Swahili poetry. They see themselves as the guardians of a citadine, orthodox, and very old tradition. Which is, of course, not so very old but constantly reinvented.



Plate 2.03 Bakathir group picture at Jamaatkhana, 18.06.2010.

Bakathir, together with Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni (see below), was my main group: I went to as many *maulidis* with them as possible and with time the 'boys' started to get used to me. Initially, they had been very polite and welcoming but reserved. The best moments to get to know them were after the performances and to a lesser degree on the way to or from a performance. With Bakathir the group always meets up at the *madrasa* just after prayers (*alasiri* or *isha*) to then head out together. As most venues are close by, we could walk there, with the small boys carrying the *madufu*, the *mawlid* book and the bag of strings for tuning. When the venue is farther away the host sends a car (a *daladala*: a small van or pick-up converted for public transport). With them, I would always sit in front (honouring me as their special guest and as a woman) keeping a respectable distance; whereas Mtendeni would always put me right in the middle so that everybody could talk to me. Walking home together with some of the older boys (in the evenings someone had to accompany me to the door) was when they were most relaxed; after the *maulidi* and away from the watchful eyes of Ibrahim, their teacher and group leader. We would laugh together, and talk a bit about *maulidi* and *qasida* and Islam,

but mostly about life in general and its hardships. Other favourite topics were their hobbies or pastimes: music (including *qasida*, *taarab*, *Bongo Flava*, and Bollywood tunes) and football. Later on, we also started discussing our private lives. In other words, some of the older boys, namely Teddy, Foum, Ayoub and Nassir, became good friends.



Plate 2.04 Nassir smiling calmly while Ayoub and a replacement drummer argue, 12.06.2010.

Nassir is a very reliable and responsible person; being pious and fond of *qasida* in general, of singing, playing *dufu* and being part of making a great event for the hosts and audience, these qualities make him stand out among his peers. During the time of my research it became clear that he is on his way to becoming the next group leader. This meant that he was under close scrutiny from Ibrahim, who also lovingly trained him for this position. Over the last months that I was there he gradually took over more responsibilities as lead singer. His biggest role, however, is the recitation of chapter 4 of the *Barzanji* in Swahili, which he renders beautifully and with feeling and dedication.



Plate 2.05 Nassir reciting chapter 4 of the *Barzanji* in the Swahili *utenzi* version, 11.06.2010.

2.4.2 Madrasat Swiffat Nabawiyat al-Karimah – New Traditionalists

Now situated in Kilimani, this *madrasa* started out in 1979 as a school for the children of soldiers at the Mazizini army barracks. The group was founded by Maalim Masoud Husein Mfaume and his nickname ‘Msolopa’²⁸ is still used for the group and their style of reading a *maulidi* (*maulidi ya Msolopa*). Their current director, Ustadh Mohammed was born in Malindi, Stone Town, and still lives there. He studied with a Shādhilī Sheikh in Kilwa, where he found a distinct style of playing with six *madufu*, each to a different rhythm. He brought it [back] to Zanzibar and the style became strongly associated with the Msolopa group until they started using keyboards in early 2009. Due to their army origins and contemporary connections, Msolopa are popularly seen as CCM.²⁹ Their mixed group performed at a wedding *maulidi* (24.07.2009) at the former Sultan’s Palace, the guest of honour being Zanzibar’s then First Lady Mama Salma Karume who brought along her friend Anna Mkaapa, the former Tanzanian President’s wife.

²⁸ The nickname does not seem to have a meaning.

²⁹ CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi* ‘The Party of the Revolution’) is the socialist party of Tanzania that has been in power since 1977 with the merger of the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) of Zanzibar and the Tanganyika African Nationalist Union (TANU). Pers. comm. Salma Salim Abdallah, July 2009, and Werner Graebner, December 2009.

The building they currently occupy was erected during 1990-93 and was inaugurated by the then president of Zanzibar Salmin Amour. The *madrasa* is governed by the board of teachers whose chairman is the head teacher Ustadh Mohammed Salum Mohammed, the vice-chairman Maalim Rashid Masoud Mohammed 'Kidete,' and their deputies, along with two or three representatives of the parents. Most of the teachers work free of charge or for very small recompense. They are far less educated than the Stone Town scholars and both teachers and students are poor. Yet, their music is one of the most powerful and among the best liked in Zanzibar. They also started to teach girls not only to sing but also to play the large frame drums and 'they are just as good as the boys' (Mwalimu Mohammed). Most of their *qasidas* do not adhere to the metrical rulings of Classical Swahili Poetry, resembling the lyrics of other song genres such as *kidumbak* or *msondo*, that combine metrical and rhymed passages with ones that only rhyme and others that are neither metrical nor rhymed but performed to music. In August 2008 they expressed the wish to do a commercial recording with keyboards and a drum set to appeal to listeners who prefer highly amplified music: *kiModern* 'in the modern way.' They have since fulfilled that wish and their recording of *Tahanina* 'Congratulations' is featured on a *Qasida za Harusi* compilation CD.



Plate 2.06 The Msolopa mixed group performing at the Palace Museum Garden, 24.07.2009.

2.4.3 Madrasat Tarbiya Islamiyya – The Experimental Youths

This *madrasa* is situated in the Mfereji Wawima area and was founded relatively recently (2004) by a group of youths who saw the need for a *madrasa* for the children in the neighbourhood. The vast majority of their *qasidas* are quite conventional, metrical and rhymed compositions. However, during performances they often ‘pick a few lines from this *qasida*, a few from this and a few from that *qasida* and combine them freshly.’ (Aman) Through this strategy they avoid boredom and make new meanings to suit a specific context (Aman and Nassor). Their poems mainly adapt the themes from *Mawlids*, the Qur’an and other religious texts and *pangapanga* ‘arrange them around.’ Some do comment on current affairs but always interpret them from a religious perspective. The most fascinating fact about them is their experimentation with singing style and instrumentation: a project with *qanun*-player Rajab Suleiman has led to an imaginative merging of elements from *qasida* and *taarab*. Truly, here *nyimbo na qasida zimeingiliana* ‘songs and *qasida* are intertwined.’

One of the older Bakathir boys, Foum, started learning to play the *dufu* with them but then came over to Bakathir to improve his playing.

2.4.4 Madrasat Zamzam – The Community Centre

This *madrasa* in Raha Leo resembles a community centre: it is basically run by one extended family and some of their neighbours. Whenever they feel like it, they sing and connect a loudspeaker so that the whole neighbourhood may benefit from the diversion and religious instruction. Their repertoire comprises only about a dozen *qasidas* composed by themselves, all of which are rather short and achieve their effect from persistent repetition and powerful, accelerating rhythms.



Plates 2.07 and 2.08 Zamzam members improvising an impromptu dance. 03.09.2008

2.4.5 Bi Sania – The Ladies

This group around Bi Sania is composed generally of a couple of older women at the core (sometimes just one) and a fluctuating group of younger women to support them. They do not normally read *maulidis* at weddings or *arbaini*, their task is to recite the Qur'an, *duas* and sing a few *qasidas* at *hitma* 'funeral or mourning ceremonies' and *uradi*, a pre-wedding ceremony to bless the bride. Bi Sania is a well-known, and very busy woman who also runs her own *madrassa* in Kisima Majongoo. This becomes a mosque during Ramadan when she leads *tarawih* (special Ramadan prayer) for an all-female group which is interrupted by *dhikr* and ends with a *qasida*.

Unfortunately, Bi Sania was too busy, often at short notice when someone had deceased, to speak to me at length; nor did she want to be photographed. On several occasions I saw her at *hitmas*; usually with one or two girls.

2.4.6 Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni

Maulidi ya Homu is similar to what El Zein (1974) and Boyd (1981) describe as *Maulidi ya Rama* or *Maulidi ya Kiswahili*. However, *Maulidi ya Homu* is a distinctly Zanzibari version. It is only performed in a few places in Unguja³⁰ and Pemba. *Maulidi ya Homu* is a Swahili Sufi performance associated with the *tariqa* founded

³⁰ Apart from the group in Stone Town, on Unguja there are only two other groups left, one at Kinyasini and one at Kiboje.

by Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī. The Rifāʿiyya originating in Egypt has spread to regions such as Iraq, Yemen, Indonesia, Comoros, Lamu, and Zanzibar. The form of *Maulidi ya Homu* performed today is thought to have originated from Iraq and come to Zanzibar around 1800.

The *Barzanji* is only exceptionally read here as *kisomo* (see also 3.4.2) and it has generally more Swahili elements. The dancing of young men is an important feature and follows an intricate choreography that is rehearsed for performances.



Plate 2.09 Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni group picture, 08.03.2011

Until a few years ago Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni (I will refer to them as 'Mtendeni') was led by Sheikh Majid Said Mansour who founded the group in the mid-1960's after learning the tradition from his grandfather. Originally, the group was Maulidi ya Homu ya Mwembe Tanga, but with time the name changed to reflect the current neighbourhood the group now occupies. Today the group is led mainly by Barua Ussi Khamis in conjunction with Hamad Njani. Since its inception the group was very popular and remains one of the most active and best-liked *Maulidi ya Homu* groups in Zanzibar until today.

Their membership policy is very inclusive: any boy who wants to join can do so, provided that he is prepared to come to practice six days a week, every day except Thursday after *isha*. Even Ibādīs are known to have been members from at least the beginning of the 20th century: Salum Abdallah (born circa 1935, died 2006) from Mwembe Tanga joined them in his teens.

In June 2010, I accompanied the group on a trip to Fes, Morocco, where they performed two shows at the famous Festival des Musiques Sacrées.

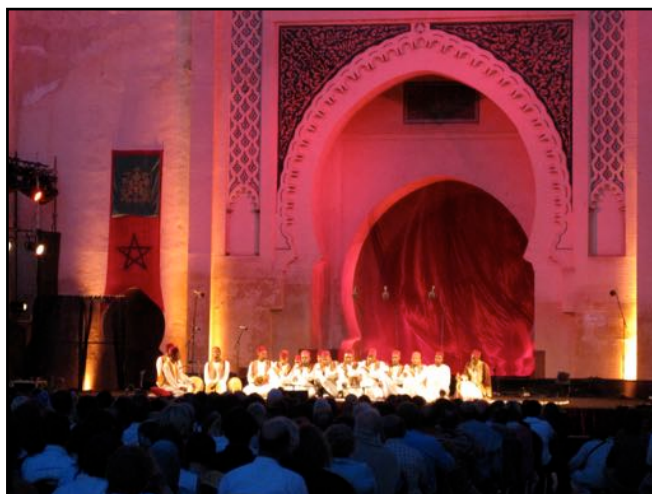


Plate 2.10 Mtendeni at Festival des Musiques Sacrées, Fes, Morocco, 06.06.2010

The audience and press were fascinated by their show and since they have been on a tour in Europe in October and November 2011 and to the World Sufi Spirit Festival in India in February 2012.

In March 2011 they were recorded by Werner Graebner and the CD was published by French label BUDA Musique in early 2012.



Plate 2.11 CD 'The Moon has risen: Resonances From Zanzibar' published by BUDA Musique.

Elsewhere, I have described a typical rehearsal session as it takes place every day except Thursday night:

'The doors creak open, lights are lit, a mat is taken out and arranged on the floor. One after another boys and young men arrive through the dark alleys, a few dressed in flowing white *kanzu* 'jellabia,' others in jeans and T-shirts. They take off their shoes on the steps and sit down to chat and laugh. Eventually, Suleiman grabs a baton, taps on the metal lid of an old paint bucket, and softly starts "Wasalam."



Plate 2.12 Mtendeni daily rehearsal session, March 2011.

Five of the young boys line up closely on the mat, while Ali and Njanga tune the drums by inserting twisted strings between the wooden rim and the skin. A couple of latecomers join in with the kneeling dancers. Half a dozen mobile phones and keys lie scattered in front of them. Soon the singing and dancing pick up and the sounds emanating from inside the small *madrasa* attract a small crowd of children from the neighbourhood who gather to listen and watch.



Plate 2.13 Mtendeni daily rehearsal session, March 2011.

As the evening progresses the music gets more and more energetic and when everyone is exhilarated but exhausted, with another “wasalam” they come to an end. They lean back on the wall and communally recite verses from the Qur’an while Alawi

is sent to the neighbours for some water. He returns with a bottle and single cup, which is passed around and filled time and again. Then, they store away their props, lock the doors and leave. And there ends a typical rehearsal session of the Mtendeni Maulid Ensemble, which takes place every day, except Thursday night.’
(Schmitt 2011)

2.4.7 Disco-style

This type performs *maulidi* in ‘disco-style:’ bright decorations and a massive sound-system are set up in the afternoon and the *maulidi* goes on till dawn (cursed by the neighbours). Some melodies are taken from *taarab* or *ngoma* songs which is frowned upon. As is their whole performance and even their way of life: Many people say that they drink and take drugs. In short, they are said to be *wahuni* ‘lawless people.’ Unfortunately, it was not possible to work with a group representing this style.

2.5 DISCOURSES ABOUT *QASIDA*

During the short preliminary fieldwork in 2008, nearly everyone I spoke to about my research topic volunteered their views on *qasida*, what it was and even more so how it should be. Not only when asked for their definitions and explanations did they express their thinking, but casually declare it while walking home or waiting somewhere. In contrast, during the main fieldwork in 2009/10 and later stays (March 2011 and November 2011-February 2012) the discourses about *qasida* had all but disappeared.

The debate around *maulidi* and *qasida* was by no means new³¹ or particularly fierce, there was no media coverage at all. It could be that my informants wanted me to be aware of their opinions and once that was done there was no more need to mention it again. Yet, this was just after the first groups in Zanzibar started to publish recordings of their *qasida* with synthesisers. Then the electrified instrumentation was a novelty that sparked controversy; whereas now this type of recording is the norm and is played loudly before and after live performances on the radio and in private homes. The boundaries of acceptability had been overstepped by bringing the instrumentation already known from Indonesian *qasidas* to Swahili ones.

Their context, as well as the discourses themselves, provide important indicators for interpreting cultural phenomena. Performers and audiences reflect on the poetic expression through its 'discursive prose representation' (White 1978: 3). While this discourse is only Zanzibaris' constructions of 'things as they see them,' they point to the boundaries of the genre on which there are a multitude of accounts and no consensus.

In the case of *qasida* there are three main issues: the definition of *qasida*, the intentions for performance, and the legitimacy of *maulidi*. Different notions of *qasida* have already been discussed above (1.4.1), albeit in a more abstract way. As the three areas of discourse are inextricably linked there will be some overlap with that earlier discussion.

³¹ Cf. Kresse 2006 and others as mentioned in 1.2; and below.

Qasidas are said to be poems and music together: *Qasida ni mashairi na lahani za kupendeza*. ‘*Qasida* are lyrics and melodies that please’ (Sheikh Sameer Zulfikar). According to Mwalimu Mohammed, they are *utamaduni wa pwani* ‘a tradition of the coast’ pointing to their Swahili character. More specifically as *ada ya mjini* ‘an urban(e) tradition’ they are a refined literary style. They are beautiful and enjoyable while explaining Islam: *Ni kuishi uislamu kwa raha na sherehe* ‘It means to live Islam cheerfully and festively’ (Mwalimu Mohammed).

Sheikh Abdulrahman al-Habshi sums it all up adding the moral implications this entails:

Qasida ni nyimbo, na ni mashairi. Zinahusu mambo ya kidunia na kiakhera. Ni sifa za Mungu, za Mtume na za uislamu. Zinakueleza njia ya kheri.

‘*Qasida* are songs, and poems. They are about earthly and hereafter matters. They are descriptions/praise of God, the Prophet and Islam. They explain the path of blessings/good fortune to you.’

The primary aim of reading a *maulidi* is to praise the Prophet: *kumsifu/kumtukuza Mtume*. This is mentioned by all my informants and Boyd. A number of formulae that are repeated throughout the ceremony invoke blessings on Muhammad. This praying for the Prophet (*kumsalia Mtume*) specifically but also the *maulidi* as a whole is seen as a form of *ibada* ‘worship’ for which every participant will receive *baraka* ‘blessings’ or *thawabu* ‘reward from God.’ On the salvific power of *maulidi* see also 3.3 and 3.8.

As the *Barzanji* and the *qasida* recount Muhammad’s life (*kueleza maisha yake*) a *maulidi* is also a means of educating the audience. The details of his life are important: how he was and lived, how he started the movement, how he was loved by his community (pers. comm. Abdulwahhab Alawy 06.08.2008). Only if you know him you can also love him. To love the Prophet (*kumpenda Mtume*) is another aim and a form of *ibada*. This is also mentioned time and again in the texts themselves (see chapter 4.1.1). Sheikh Abdulrahman al-Habshi, stressed the importance of *kuwazoesha watoto kumpenda Mtume* ‘get children used to loving the Prophet’ (pers. comm. 12.08.2008) Muhammad Abdallah Rajab is convinced that *qasida* play an important role in teaching and reminding society about the Prophet’s life through poetry as everybody loves poetry and does not consider it learning or an effort especially as it also involves celebration.

Both the example of his life and the advice given in wedding and *arbaini qasida* is not only directed at the couple or child but everybody present. As an indirect way of reasoning it is polite and probably more effective (Mohammed Idris). On indirectness and *fumbo* 'metaphor, riddle' in the texts see 4.4.2.

Like many other of the older male informants, Mohammed Abdallah firmly believes that earlier *qasida* were more spiritual and expressive of theological thoughts. Mwalimu Hemed from Amani thinks that the older *qasidas* were more beautiful as their composers' had *undani wa lugha* 'intimacy with language.' Their linguistic and literary style (*balagha*) was more complex and thus required more reflection on the part of the performers and audiences whereas today's *qasidas* were more *mambo mepesi* 'light stuff,' easy to understand and geared at dancing and being merry.

The Tarbiya composers say that they instinctively include local *nyimbo* 'songs' or episodes from current affairs and reinterpret them from a religious viewpoint in their *qasidas*. As they all, and all Zanzibaris, had grown up hearing *taarab*, *muziki wa dansi* and the like, alongside *qasida*, all these musical genres have had an effect on their [own] compositions. This is why they say *qasida na nyimbo zimeingiliana* 'qasida and (secular) songs are intertwined,' which is an exciting illustration of inter-textual and inter-musical phenomena, to be discussed in chapters 6 and 3.5 respectively.

The social function of *maulidi* is for people to assemble and get to know each other and of course celebrate together. Yunus Sameja says that one of the features of Sunni Islam is to use every occasion for celebration and being joyful. While Shi'ite Islam stresses the sad and mournful events. Mainly, the music, singing and dancing together, and the common purpose of praising the Prophet and celebrating, generate the communal nature of *maulidi*. Again, the texts themselves provide meta-commentary on this (see 4.4.2).

While being religious (or pious) the majority of the youths who perform really enjoy singing and beating the *madufu*. Many are not just passionate for this particular style but also love music in general (and especially *taarab* and Bollywood *filmi*). For the self-organised girls' group from Msolopa independence and empowerment are additional benefits.

In two ways *qasidas* are said to help keep away temptations to sin: firstly they contain advice about proper behaviour, and secondly and very specifically, while

singing *qasida* you cannot be doing something evil. Sameja says that especially during Ramadan, the *qasida* after *alasiri* 'afternoon prayer' are meant to relax you and keep you engaged in an enjoyable activity so as to forget your grumbling stomach.

Despite the commercialisation Mohammed Abdallah thinks that they are still much better as an entertainment than other music. Another factor in the decline of meaning is the intention of performers and their confusion as to what is *qasida* and what is *ngoma* which was obvious in their choosing *taarab* or *ngoma* rhythms or melodies to intone *qasidas*. Therefore, he concludes that these days *qasida* has become a business and an entertainment rather than a spiritual or religious endeavour. This was obvious with some *madrasas* where everyone was involved in performing them. This is unlike Bakathir where only about 20 students out of a thousand are in the *qasida* group. The main reason, in his view, for this change is that only since the 1980s *maulidis* have become part of the wedding celebrations whereas before they were exclusively for the birth of the Prophet and by extension for any child. This extension of the market into this totally different sphere was at the heart of people forgetting what *maulidi* was about.

Knowing, understanding and loving the Prophet is one of the chief aims to be achieved through *qasida* as '[y]ou cannot understand Mohammed through prose' (Abdulwahhab Alawy).

According to Yunus Sameja (pers. comm. August 2008) there are three levels of awareness or degrees of knowledge mentioned in the Qur'an: *'ilm al-yaqīn* 'knowledge of truth,' *'ayn al-yaqīn* 'seeing (lit. eye) of truth' and *haqq al-yaqīn* 'assurance of truth' (102:5&7, 69:51). He illustrated these with the example of an apple. You can read a scientific account about apples, that will give you knowledge. You can look at apples which will give you an image. Only eating an apple will give you the taste, the experience of what an apple is. And only poetry can convey this experience, the 'taste' of Muhammad. The beauty of the words and music, combined with meaning to think about, has a double effect; it gives relaxation and lasts long in the mind and heart of the listener (Mohamed Idris).

Many informants say that listening (and reciting) *qasida* 'calms the heart and soul' for which Mohamed Idris mentions Sura 13: 28: 'Those who have faith and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of God – truly it is in the remembrance of

God that hearts find peace.’ Abdulwahhab draws a parallel to *wuḍū’* ‘ablution’ when he says that *maulidi* and *qasida* ‘cools the big fear’ that everybody felt.

Beyond all reasoning, praising the Prophet is an activity that is not only sanctioned by God but He Himself blesses and prays for Muhammad along with the angels as is mentioned in the Qur’an ‘God and His angels bless the Prophet – so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace’ (33: 56). This sura is recited immediately after the *dua* chapter of the *Barzanji* and the vast majority of the audience joins in with verve (see also 3.3 and 6.1).

This is also the key corroboration mentioned for the legitimacy to celebrate *maulidis*.³² ‘To compose poems is *halal* not *haram*’ says Abdulwahhab and gives the example of the Prophet who composed a *qasida* for a wedding himself.

The joyful nature of *qasida* and the fact that everybody can easily join in, and that it is fun to do so, makes it a means of rendering Islam accessible. This holds true for everybody: grown-up believers, children and potential converts. The *qasida*’s power of drawing people towards Islam has been used in *da‘wah* missionary activities in mainland Tanzania and Uganda.³³ *Ni kivutio kwa watoto* ‘It attracts children.’

2.6 Maulidi and the Authorities

Today, and historically too, the majority of local scholars do not only participate in the celebrations of *Maulidi ya Mtume* but they are often the organisers or guests of honour. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy is reported to have presided over *maulidi* functions in his role as Chief Qadi (Loimeier 2009: 386). And as an inspector of religious teaching he supervised the teaching of *mawlid* texts in Zanzibar government schools (Loimeier 2009: 399).

After leaving Zanzibar for Kenya in the late 1960s due to the political situation, he seems to have changed his mind about *maulidi*, which he then deemed *bid‘ah* ‘heretical innovation’ (Lacunza Balda 1989: 247 and Loimeier 2009: 397). However, Loimeier clarifies that rather than fighting *maulidi* in general, ‘he reacted against an ‘Alawī tradition of performing the *mawlid*, namely, the Lamu-based *mawlid al-Ḥabshī* that was a form of the *mawlid* *ya dufu*. But again: by speaking out against

³² Cf. Kresse 2006.

³³ Pers. comm. Abdulrahman al-Hibshi, 12.08.2008, and Mwalimu Mohammed, 13.08.2008.

the *mawlid* ya *dufu* he did not start something new, but rather followed the position of the previous Chief Qāḍī of Kenya, Muḥammad Qāsim al-Mazrūʿī.³⁴ He therefore concludes that Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy took a politically, not religiously motivated stance against some forms of *maulidi* (Loimeier 2009: 399).

After 1964, the revolutionary government, and Karume in particular, agitated against popular religion as well as so-called superstition. This included the public *maulidi* celebrations, *dhikr*, and *uganga* ‘sorcery, healing’, which were banned until 1972, when Karume was killed. Under Aboud Jumbe (1972-84), the ‘moral rigorism’ continued and became bureaucratised, with written permits required for any such activity. Ali Hassan Mwinyi’s administration (1984-85) reduced their control of the social and religious life of Zanzibaris. ‘To this day, however, public religious or social events, have to be sanctioned by the Ministry of Interior. And to this day any “Islamic” activity has to be registered by the Chief Qadi and the Mufti.’ (Loimeier 2009: 463-464)³⁴

The government’s efforts at exerting control over all aspects of everyday life, including religion, and the instrumentalisation of Muslim functionaries for this purpose, has lead to the emergence of groups which oppose the existing religious, social and political structures. The *watu wa bidaa* started attacking forms of popular religion, such as *maulidi*, in the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years their main interest was the confrontation with the Mufti and other office holders. ‘Despite the popularity of their critique of the CCM government, the *watu wa bidaa*, while controlling some mosques and, at times, influencing public debates, have so far not gained a foothold in state-controlled institutions such as the *Waqf Commission* or institutions of Islamic learning’ (Loimeier 2009: 134-135).

³⁴ In order to obtain my Research Permit from the Ofisi ya Waziri Kiongozi, I first had to get a recommendation letter by from the Mufti, for which I had to meet him in person. His letter, along with a formal application letter detailing my research which had to be approved by the Office for Good Governance, and a three-page form, after many hours waiting on several occasions, finally got me the Permit. Which was in turn required to obtain a Residence Permit but that is yet another story involving more waiting and even more forms and formalities.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have looked at *maulidi* groups, their *madrasas*, transmission of knowledge and we have examined the significance of Islamic education, Sufi brotherhoods, the location of *madrasas* as factors that shape *maulidi* groups.

The historical development of Islamic education especially emerged as a key component, since almost every Zanzibari child receives some kind of *madrasa* education of which the singing of *qasida* and the recitation of *mawlid* texts as a means of teaching the *sira* 'biography' of the Prophet are an integral part.

During the last century, Islamic education has undergone considerable changes resulting in a fragmentation into many different models of education, with different types of *madrasas* and syllabuses. Particularly since 1964, the (revolutionary) government sought to transform Zanzibari society and eradicate all traces of the pre-Revolutionary authorities. In this process, 'Zanzibar's religious scholars who had been able to consolidate their role as mediators of knowledge in the colonial period and to even define the contents of modern Islamic education to a considerable degree, completely lost their role as mediators of knowledge as well as their "Deutungshoheit", their power to define the contents of (Islamic) education' (Loimeier 2009: 526-527). At the same time, the old ties with Haḍramawt and other Swahili centres of Islamic learning have been replaced with new connections to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan and south Asia. 'Through these new poles of orientation, new concepts of education have been introduced and have triggered debates about issues such as the sighting of the moon, the *mawlid* or the *dhikr*.' (Loimeier 2009: 531) These discourses around *maulidi* and *qasida* have been instrumental in shaping notions of the genre and consequently the genre itself. The recent rise in popularity of *qasida* is not a single phenomenon, but rather larger socio-political changes have impacted on Islamic learning and thus on a whole range of cultural phenomena, including clothing (see 1.4.2).

The variety of *madrasa* types is at the heart of the plurality found in *qasidas* styles. Discourses around *qasida* and *maulidi* constantly reflect upon and seek to rationalise this plurality with the notion of a unified genre. The intentions underlying the performance of *maulidi/qasida*, praising the Prophet and

endeavouring to morally improve society, are at the heart of the matter. This fits in well with Furniss' suggestion of taking into account 'function, focus and intent of different kinds of utterance' for the classifications of genres, as '[t]his permits a more flexible and dynamic account of what writers and speakers are *doing* when they write and speak in particular forms and contexts' (Furniss 1996: 2).

After establishing this basis of social location and context, in the next chapter we will look at performance, which in turn is the context for the texts themselves in the next chapter but one.

Chapter Three

Performance



This chapter describes the performances of two types of *maulidi*: *Maulidi ya Barzanji* and *Maulidi ya Homu*. It covers the respective patterns of performance, established practice and its aesthetics (decorations, clothing of performers and audience, invitation cards), the chain of events and interaction between performers and audience as well as music. Finally it will look at *maulidi* as a ritual, its social space and the reasons and intentions for performance. In this context, I talk about the rise of *qasida* as a genre over the last years.

3.1 TYPES AND HISTORY OF MAULIDI

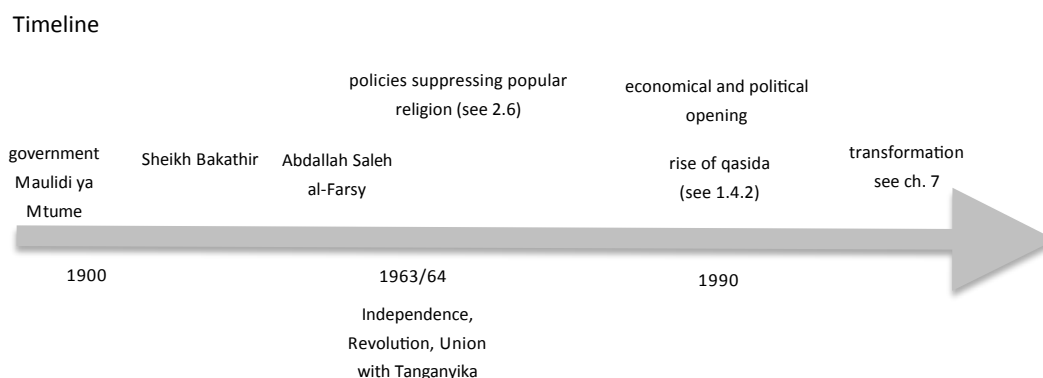


Figure 3.01 Timeline of *maulidi* and *qasida* in Zanzibar.

Since the thirteenth century *mawlid*s are known to have taken place during the month of *rabīʿ al-awwal* all over the Sunni-Islamic world to celebrate the birth and life of the Prophet Muhammad. Long panegyric poems that recount his life and praise him were recited as part of the ritual from about the fifteenth century (Brockelmann 1943: 310).

Boyd (1985: 8-11) mentions five distinct forms of *maulidi* from Lamu, namely *Maulidi ya Kiswahili*, *Maulidi al-Habshi*, *Maulidi Barzanji*, *Maulidi Diriji* and *Maulidi Sharaful Anam* (Kukangaya) and describes the differences between the styles. El-

Zein (1974) also for Lamu talks about two forms of *maulidi* that differ in style and the participants' social background.

The historical development of *maulidi* ceremonies in Zanzibar can only be guessed at as the available historical studies concern Lamu and information on the Zanzibari situation is non-existent or not yet available. Without doubt the Zanzibari *maulidi* and *qasida* similar to Lamuan practices because Lamu used to be the religious and literary 'capital' of the Swahili world. Some of my informants wondered why I was interested in Zanzibar and did not go to Lamu where they did the 'real thing.'³⁵

Mohammed Idriss and Yunus Abdallah Sameja say that in Zanzibar there are four *maulidi* texts :

1 – *Mawlid Barzanji nathr* (the prose version of his praise poem on Muhammad)

2 – *Maulidi ya Homu*

No longer performed are:

3 – *Şimt al-Durar*, also called *Mawlid al-Ḥabshi* after its author (see below)

4 – *Maulidi Debei* (el Zein 1974)

As the alternative name of the *Şimt al-Durar* 'String of Pearls' indicates *Maulidi al-Habshi* was composed by a Ḥaḍramī scholar called Ali b Muhammad al-Ḥibshī, deceased circa 1915 AD (Boyd 1985a: 9). The 15-chapter, poetic prose text is a eulogic biography of the Prophet Muhammad.³⁶ It arrived in Zanzibar via Lamu and the 'Alawiyya brotherhood by Sāliḥ b 'Alawī b 'Abdallah Jamāl Al-Layl who was one of the most prominent Swahili Islamic scholars of the 20th century. Sāliḥ came from the influential family of Jamal Al-Layl and is often referred to by his honorific title *al-Ḥabīb Sāliḥ* 'the Beloved Sāliḥ'.³⁷ It is performed until today on the last Thursday of Rabī' al-Awwal³⁸ in Lamu, Mombasa and Mambui (Kenya), in Yemen and in Indonesia, all centres of the 'Alawiyya brotherhood. In Zanzibar, it ceased to be performed about 20 years ago (pers. comm. Yunus Sameja, September 2008).

³⁵ This statement refers to the local discourse only. Before the revolution, Zanzibar was an important cultural and religious centre of learning on the Swahili coast. Cf. Chapter 2.2.

³⁶ The metaphor of the 'Strung Pearls' or 'String of Pearls' is common in Swahili poetry and Arabic literature alike (cf. Mahazi 2004).

³⁷ Interview with Muhammad Idris, August 2008. See also Khitamy (1995).

³⁸ See explanations on the Swahili names for Islamic months below 3.4.1.

The *maulidi Debei*, also colloquially named after its author the Shāfi‘ī scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b ‘Alī b al-Dayba‘ (d. 944 AH) from Zabīd in Yemen (Brockelmann 1943: 549), is not performed in Zanzibar any more but it is popular in South East Asia. A compilation of the *Mawlid* text, complete with transliteration and translation, together with some *qasidas* by Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani shows remarkable similarities in the way it is meant to be performed concerning alternation of *qasidas* and readings, structuring formulae, and even the exact same *qasidas* (*Marhaba, Ya Rabbi salli*) and the combination of Arabic formulae as refrain and vernacular (in this case English) stanzas (Kabbani 2006).

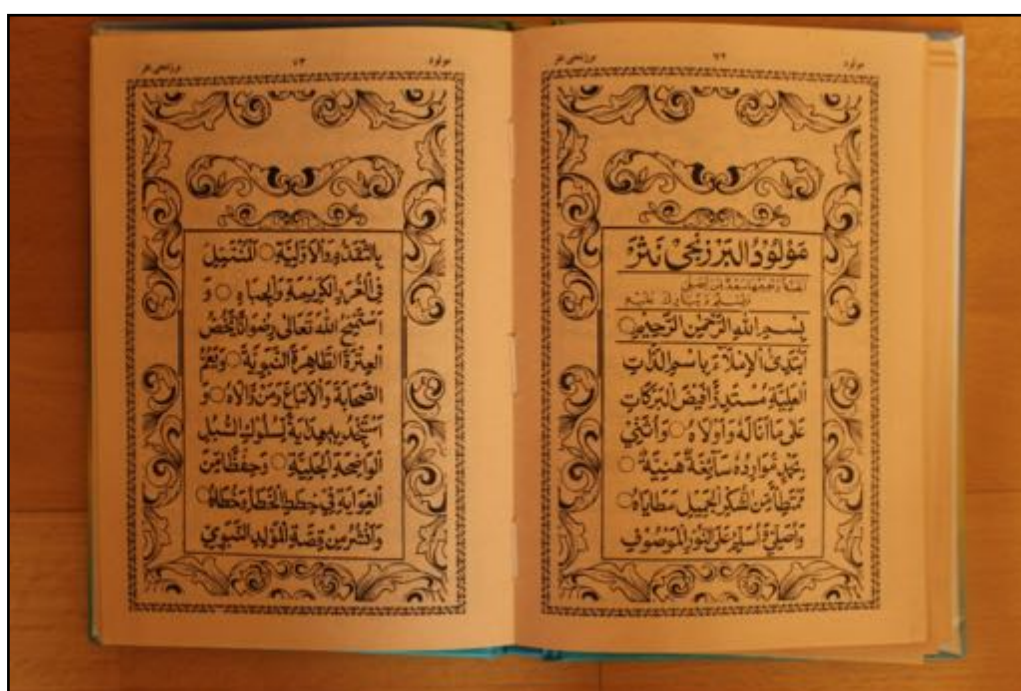


Plate 3.01 The first two pages of the *Barzanji* in a locally available *majmū‘ al-mawālīd* ‘Compilation of *Mawlid*s.’

The *Barzanji*, named after its composer, Imam S. Ja‘far b Ḥasan b ‘Abd-al-Karīm b Muhammad b Zayn al-‘Abdīn al-Barzanjī (1690-1766 AD – 1102-1180 AH), spread to many parts of the Islamic world and was consequently translated into the languages of the non-Arabic speaking Muslims – such as Swahili and Malay – either in the form of prose or poetry. Alongside the poem Ja‘far al-Barzanji also wrote a prose version of his praising biography of the Prophet Muhammad which consists of 355 verses of *saja‘* ‘rhymed prose’ divided into 18 chapters. This *nathr* ‘prose’ version is undoubtedly the most widely read and has the longest history on the Swahili coast.

According to Sameer Zulfikar Ramzan (pers. comm. August 2008) the *Barzanji* is used in at least 95% of *maulidis*. In my own experience, this is the default *maulidi*. Unless it is specifically stated that *Maulidi ya Homu* will be performed, the *Barzanji* is read, and even during *Maulidi ya Homu* the *Barzanji* may in rare cases be read as *kisomo* ‘reading.’³⁹ While we know that the origins of *Maulidi ya Homu* are with the *tarīqat* al-Rifā‘īyah whose presence on the east African littoral dates to around 1800, everything else remains unknown. In contrast to all other types of *maulidi* mentioned here, *Maulidi ya Homu* is only found on Unguja and Pemba islands. The term itself probably derives from the Arabic root ḥ-w-m ‘circle, float (as of birds)’ but also by extension of thoughts going around in your mind. The Swahili expression ‘yahom!’ is explained in Kamusi as ‘tamko linaloeleza au kuashiria kufika kwa chombo; kama vile jahazi, mahali palipokusudiwa kwendea’ [an exclamation to make known or announce the arrival of a boat, e.g. a dhow, at the place where it was intended to go to] (Akida 1981: 320, translation mine).

The locally available book *majmū‘ al-mawālīd* ‘collection of *Mawlid*s’ usually include the *sharaf al-anām* ‘The most honourable of beings’ (a praise poem on Muhammad), *Barzanji nathr* and *naḍhm* (both the prose and the rhymed biographic accounts of Muhammad), and a *du‘ā* ‘supplication’ section which is an integral part of the *Barzanji*.⁴⁰

³⁹ On *kisomo* see below 3.4.2. Pers. comm. Barua Ussi, February 2010.

⁴⁰ With a slightly different title the *majmū‘at mawālīd* assembles *Mawlid* texts and *qaṣṣā'id* by ‘Alawī sheikhs.

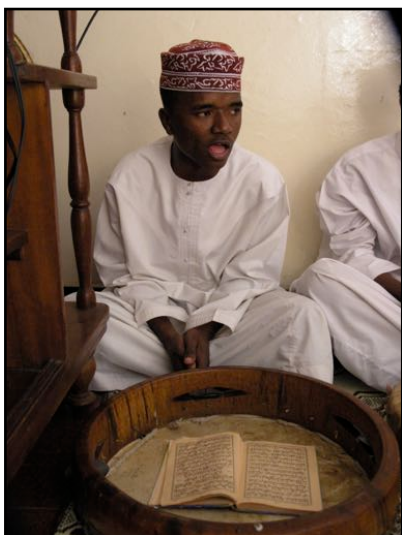


Plate 3.02 Othman of Bakathir reading from the *Barzanji* (23.08.2008).

It is unknown when people started performing *maulidi* and singing *qasida* in East Africa. However, it does not seem to have changed much since at least the late 19th century. The big *Maulidi an-Nabiy* hosted by the Zanzibari government celebrated its centenary in 1994 (some say 1996).⁴¹ This big public feast is held annually in the Mnazi Mmoja grounds and a number of groups participate in a competition. This formerly included two Indian origin communities: Bohora⁴² and the Sunni Maliki, or Memon (Loimeier 2009: 29).

⁴¹ Several informants – Dedes, Sameer, Muhammad Idris, Mw Mohamed, Ibrahim– mention 1994. Sameer and Ibrahim say it might have been 1996.

⁴² The Bohora, or Dawoodi Bohora, are a community of Shi'ite Muslims (Ismaili) of Gujarati descent who live all over East Africa and have strong ties to the Indian communities and especially among each other. They are mainly shop-owners and traders. Their dress sets them apart visually, the men wearing salwar kameez and the gold-white *topi* 'hats' and the women in colourful *rida* (two piece outer garment, roughly equivalent to the Swahili *buibui*).



Plate 3.03 Zanzibar Mnazi Mmoja Eid celebrations circa 1905, unknown photographer.

Similarly the exact time of introduction of the *Barzanji* to East Africa is uncertain (el Zein 1974: 40, Becker 1911, Knappert 1971: 48). The beginning of the 19th century is the earliest period for which information on the celebration of *maulidi* is available. El Zein (1974: 40-42) describes the various *maulidi* rituals in Lamu at that time and their connections to certain social groups. The two ways of reciting a *maulidi* are the *Barzanji*, which was monopolised by the 'more advantaged *waungwana*' (noblemen), and the *Maulidi ya Kiswahili*, the domain of the 'lesser *waungwana*' represented by the freed slaves and the Comorians. Especially the *Barzanji* style shows the strong connections between the ritual and class. It was only read in a handful of households in Lamu, in strict order, as a private ceremony and only at one time of the year. Furthermore, it could only be recited by specific people 'licensed' to do so: '*ulamā*' 'scholars', *khaṭībs* 'preachers' and *wenye chuoni* 'directors of Quranic schools.' Otherwise, there would be no blessing in reading this text that was considered 'second only to the Qur'an in its sacredness' (el Zein 1974: 40). This solemn affair differed radically from the lavish *mawlid* celebrations held, for example, in Egypt.⁴³

Those who could not participate in this elitist variety of Islam saw themselves increasingly marginalised. Membership in a Sufi brotherhood, in particular the Qādiriyya, was a way of becoming 'good' Muslims, which to some extent explains the immense growth of the Sufi brotherhoods on the Swahili Coast in the 19th

⁴³ As described by Edward Lane in his classic *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* which was first published in 1836 (2005: 436-450).

century. The more inclusive Sufi rituals, in particular the *dhikr* and *maulidi*, were often linked with the activities of local dance (*ngoma*) societies. Despite the condemnation of these new egalitarian rituals because of their association with female spirit cults by the old elites, a new generation of scholars accepted them (Loimeier 2009: 67).

Everybody in the neighbourhood became involved in the new style of *maulidi*, which included sensual elements, such as the burning of incense, and praising the Prophet in Swahili verse. According to Loimeier, it also included 'singing, dancing and the use of drums, all of which was deemed improper by the *waungwana*. Another reason why they might have looked down upon it is the changed emphasis which shifted from a display of class to highlighting education and *da'wā* as well as being an expression of individual devotion articulated in their own language rather than Arabic.' (2009: 67)

He goes on describing how even the Sufi scholars imposed some restriction of what was permissible:

'By the mid-1880s, some Qadiri versions of the *dhikr* such as the *zikri ya dufu* and the *zikri ya kukohoa* had become a popular form of worship on the coast, especially among slaves. The adoption of these rituals by converts acquired such momentum that even some of the new Qadiri scholars started to criticise them: they were not willing to accept all forms of "localisation" of Islamic rituals.' (2009: 67)

In the second half of the 19th century Sufi scholars had become important agents of reform, propagating a more inclusive approach and thus reaching much larger audiences. They were instrumental in developing new religious and cultural ideas and form, transgressing former ethnic, social and linguistic boundaries. By introducing new rituals and opening up exclusivist ones, concepts of religion and community changed drastically through Sufi scholars. (Bang 2003: 130, Loimeier 2009: 67-68)

Originally, the *Mawlid Dhibbi/Debe'i* was read but this was replaced around 1910 with the *Şimt al-Durar* by Ali b Muhammad al-Hibshi – a fifteen chapter history of the life of the Prophet rendered in poetic verse.⁴⁴ The new *maulidi* was introduced in Lamu and also in Zanzibar, but its extent and popularity were altered when it was

⁴⁴ For a description of the ritual of the *Şimt al-Durar Mawlid*, as well as a partial translation into English, see Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad, article on Ali al-Hibshi, on www.iqra.net.

brought to the public sphere (Pouwels 1987: 196-198). How exactly it changed however, remains unclear.

‘What we are told is that the South African Muhammad Salih Hendricks, together with Bā Kathir, were instrumental in ‘reorganising the island’s Maulid al-Nabi celebrations’ in 1902. Shortly thereafter, the *mawlid* celebrations began to be held in the Mnazi Moja recreational grounds, apparently on the initiative of a Punjabi lawyer named Sayyid Muhammad Hasan. The latter was, like the ‘Alawis, known as an educator who strove to make Islamic learning (or at least the fundamentals of Islamic practice) accessible to the population at large.’ (Bang 2003: 150)

Until the late 1970s *maulidi* also included the recitation of *utenzi* (pers. comm. Ibrahim Bakar Salum, August 2008). Nowadays these are few and limited to weddings, composed especially to praise and congratulate the couple and their families.

From the historical accounts by Loimeier, El-Zein and Bang it seems clear to me that today’s Zanzibari *maulidi* combines the features of what were formerly two styles. It is both in Swahili and Arabic, as well as public or private depending on the occasion. The occasions for which a *maulidi* is read are the same as a *Maulidi ya Kiswahili* (el Zein 1974: 42). So too, is the celebratory nature, including movements, dancing and the use of drums. Another important feature which derives from the Sufi-Swahili style is of course the singing of *qasida*. Today the *qasida* are interlocked with readings from the *Barzanji*, adding the sacredness and prestigious nature of the Arabic *waungwana* ritual. The blessing derived from a *maulidi* is the result of a syncretisation of features from both early nineteenth century styles which are now completely merged and a tradition of its own.⁴⁵

Harries writes that, ‘During the month of Rabi’ al-Awwal [...] it is customary for the Quran and extracts from the *Mawlid Barzanji* to be read in private houses as well as in mosques. In Zanzibar this has become a traditional procedure’ (1958: 27). He obtained this information from a 1933 Zanzibar Gazette,⁴⁶ which shows that by this time, at the very least, the practice of reading the *Barzanji*, both for public and private functions, was well established and widespread. A good decade earlier, Dale (1920) writes that,

⁴⁵ Cf. the similar development in *taarab* and *kidumbak* described by Topp (1992).

⁴⁶ Zanzibar Gazette, News Supplement, XLII, 1933: 159 (cited after Harries 1958: 27).

‘One of the most popular books in Zanzibar is a book called Maulid Barzanji, a kind of Gospel of the nativity of Muhammad [...]. Among its readers are the principal Kadhi and the leader of prayers in the principal mosque.’ (cited after Harries 1958: 27)

This oldest source is proof that the *Barzanji* was already a prevailing read amongst the elite on the island.

Whereas, initially the ‘Alawiyya promoted a more ‘democratic’ *maulidi* by introducing the recitation of the *ṣimt al-durar* in an open *majlis* ‘assembly, spiritual gathering’, today they represent the opposite. Considering that now, all *maulidis* stage the formerly exclusive upper-class *Barzanji*, the earlier class distinction that was marked by the choice of *mawlid* text and the attendees has shifted to a range of styles including the prestigious, orthodox and sedate Stone Town style of Bakathir, to the vibrant drumming of the Shādhilī Msolopa group and out to the ecstatic abandon and family atmosphere at Zamzam.

The boundaries in post-independence and post-socialist⁴⁷ Zanzibari society are not as clear-cut as they once were; contemporary *maulidi* performances reflect these complex social structures in the choice of group, place, and number of guests as well as in the aesthetic details of decoration, dress, invitation cards, and incense burners. In the following section I describe these constituents of performance, time, space, and players.

⁴⁷ By post-socialist I refer to the transformations in Tanzanian society after the demise of socialism in the 1990s.

3.2 PERFORMERS

The performers of *qasida* are mainly children, youth and their teachers from *madrasas*. At some *madrasas* the children can join in the rehearsal sessions from any age, many as early as three or four years old.

Bakathir has a special selection process which is done at the beginning of each school year. Only those boys wanting to join who have memorised the *juz* ‘*amma*’ (the 30th and last part of the Qur’an) can take part in the auditions. Each year, only about two to five new students are selected out of about 20 who apply (the whole *madrasa* has approximately 1000 students). The boys have to sing and recite after the teacher individually and after all are through, he, Ibrahim Bakar Salum, announces who may join. The following weeks they will have to attend rehearsals in the evenings after *isha* ‘evening prayer’ until he thinks they are sufficiently prepared to come along to performances (four to eight weeks). He will closely observe them and continue the training on the job.

In general, Ibrahim is a very strict teacher and group leader.⁴⁸ The younger boys have to meet at the *madrasa* for prayers (*alasiri* or *isha*) before leaving together to perform. They also carry the *dufu*, the bag of strings for tuning (see below 3.5), and the *Mawlid* book to the venue.

The boys dress up in *kanzu* (long white robe), *kofia* (embroidered hat), and often – usually at night – the younger boys add a *kilemba* (turban).

⁴⁸ He even checks the length of their fingernails and on one occasion he personally undertook to shorten one of the older boys fingernails because long nails indicate *uhuni* ‘ill behaviour.’



Plate 3.04 The Bakathir boys in white *kanzu* and *kilemba* (23.08.2008).

The girls wear *sare* 'same colours and clothes.' They have special clothes for performance with matching scarves (of course) and sometimes even matching scarf-pins.



Plates 3.05 and 3.06 The Msolopa girls in their purple and white *sare* (22.05.2010) and in pink (08.08.2008).

Wearing a kind of uniform makes them appear as a group and shows the level of preparation and professionalism they put into their performances. Their matching dress and cleanliness is part of the Bakathir aesthetic of immaculate appearance. Also, across time and performances it has created a genre-specific style and an idiosyncratic group identity.

Usually, the audience sit on *mabusati* 'mats,' but occasionally, the audience sit on chairs (e.g. In the Bwawani Hall). There is always a designated space for the group, either close to the stage for the bride or on their own stage. They always sit on mats or carpets. In private homes, the *maulidi* mostly takes place in the (emptied) living room or courtyard.

What Askew describes as ‘male lines and female circles’ (1999) for other musical genres is true to a degree for *maulidi* as well. The all-boys groups tend to sit in two lines and the girls in a more circular arrangement. However, when they are seated on a stage they all sit in rows facing the front.



Plates 3.07 and 3.08 Bakathir neat rows (06.03.2011) and Msolopa girls’ circle (08.08.2008).

In line with their general emphasis on propriety, Bakathir always sit in two rows facing each other, with the older boys against the wall. On a stage they would sit in two or three rows with the younger ones in front and the older ones in the back. If there is a lack of space and this arrangement cannot be kept up they form additional lines, but always remain neat.

The Msolopa girls group sit in a rectangle as the ones with the big *madufu* sit against the wall. Their mixed counterparts sit in rows on stage and a cluster of the girls and the drummers respectively next to each other.



Plate 3.09 The mixed Msolopa group with a cluster of girls in the middle surrounded by the men (24.07.2009).

The performers' task is to make the performance enjoyable for the hosts and audience, which includes everything they do from the details of their appearance, to punctuality, to the overall quality of the performance, ability to integrate specific requests, and to their seriousness and good intentions.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Conversation with Foum Said Abdalla, Nassir Ali Haji and Ayoub, 12.05.2010.

3.3 OCCASIONS AND MOTIVATIONS

Qasidas not only express aesthetics and values but through them the Swahili also bestow *baraka* 'blessings' on others. *Maulidi* does not itself generate *baraka*, rather it is a means of attracting blessings from a divine source as the Prophet Muhammad. Abdulrahman Mwinyi says: *Ukisoma maulidi rahma inateremka*. 'When you read a *maulidi* (God's) mercy comes down' (pers. comm. 29.08.2008). This suggests that *maulidi* is not an end in itself rather '*Mawlid* is a medium of *baraka*' (Katz 2007: 84).

The binding ties between the genre and certain social events is obvious. A *maulidi* reading facilitates *rite de passage* and marks Islamic holidays.

The Prophet's birthday on 12th *Rabi' al-Awwal* (and the celebrations that take place around this date) is the key event of *maulidi* and it derives its name from the occasion. Throughout the year, most *qasidas* are performed for family celebrations: weddings and *arbaini* 'forty,' here refers to the welcoming of the child into the world when it is 40 days old). The less important and/or less frequently celebrated events are: *kufungua nyumba* 'moving into a new house,' Ramadan, circumcision, Hajj, *Miraji*,⁵⁰ *nadhiri* 'vow,' and *hauli*, a ceremony one year after death or more generally the visiting of a grave.

Today only at very few mosques in urban Zanzibar (Miskiti Gibreel and Barza) a *maulidi* is still read every Thursday after *maghrib*.⁵¹

During *Mfungo Sita* (or *Rabi' al-Awwal*), many *mitaa* 'neighbourhoods' and some mosques and *madrasas*, each have their own celebration, to which others are invited. Despite being 'public' events, most of these *maulidis* are male only.

An exclusively male audience to a live *qasida* performance can be found at *akdis* 'signing of the wedding contract' and at most *Maulidi ya Mfungo Sita* of the *mitaa*. For the occasion of wedding *maulidis* the audiences are female only, with the

⁵⁰ From Arabic *Mi'rāj* or *Al-Isrā' wa-l-Mi'rāj*, the Prophet's journey and ascension to the heavens where he speaks with earlier Prophets and Allah.

⁵¹ In my host family on the Comoros this is practiced till today: every Thursday night a boy from the local *madrasa* comes and sits in the living room where he reads the whole *Barzanji* aloud. Nobody really pays attention to him or his reading. When he finishes he is given some food as *sadaqa* 'charity.'

obvious exception of the performers (in the case of a mixed or male *maulidi* group) and the photographers, video-filmers and sound-engineers, and less visibly some male relatives might ‘hang around.’ Their presence at the female-only wedding *maulidis* is never mentioned or seen as problematic. The same is true for *arbaini*, private and school *mfungo sita maulidis* where the women are joined by children. The *arbaini*, when a *maulidi* is read for the child but also celebrates his or her mother, is a kind of training *maulidi* for the children: here they learn how to behave in this social context, where they can observe the grown-ups while their mothers and aunts watch out and tell them what to do. They can practice *maulidi* and play with the other children.

Furaha na mwangaza kwa wenye kumtukuza
Mtume wetu Aziza Shafii wa sote umma (B28: 39-40)

*Joy and light, on those who hallow him,
Our Beloved, the Healer of the Umma.*

Within the framework of *maulidi* two actions are perceived as acts of piety that yield copious rewards; the invocation of blessings on the Prophet, and the distribution of food (as *sadaqa*):

The dynamic underlying the exchange was one of reciprocity, although a highly asymmetrical reciprocity in which the modest offerings of humble believers were requited with vast amounts of divine rewards. [...] The invocation of blessings on the Prophet is a clear example of a speech act whose efficacy was more important than its meaning. [...] understood primarily as a means of eliciting bounteous rewards from an infinitely generous and responsive deity.’ (Katz 2007: 81-82)

Making *dua* for anyone,⁵² not just the Prophet, is believed to benefit the supplicator as well, because the angels responded to your *dua* by saying ‘on you too.’⁵³ Within the realm of *dua* praying upon the Prophet is certainly the most beneficial as it is mentioned in the Qur’an that ‘God and His angels bless the Prophet—so, you who

⁵² The remembrance of others when repenting in *dua* is mentioned in the Qur’an itself: ‘[Prophet...] ask for forgiveness for your sins and for believing men and women.’ (47:19)

⁵³ Tradition ascribes to the Prophet the dictum: ‘The *dua* of a Muslim for his brothers in his absence is readily accepted, an angel is appointed to his side, whenever he makes a beneficial *dua* for his brother, the angel says, “Amīn, may you be blessed with the same”’ [Saḥīḥ Muslim?]

According to the 13th Hadith in al-Nawawī’s collection which he says are reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim, Muhammad said: ‘None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.’ (al-Nawawī 2007: 108-111; translation mine)

believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.’ (33:56) This sura, which is recited immediately after the *dua* chapter of the *Barzanji*, thus positioned makes *maulidi* an activity that is not only sanctioned by God but He Himself blesses and prays for Muhammad along with the angels. As the vast majority of the audience joins in with verve this is a last climax point in *maulidi*, performatively, textually and theologically (See also 6.1)

Katz further specifies the reciprocity of *dua*:

‘The point of invoking blessings upon a personage whose religious status is beyond further exaltation lies, perhaps unsurprisingly, in the potential to elicit further benefits in return. [...] “since the benefit of your prayer [upon the Prophet] actually returns to you, you are actually praying for yourself.”’ (2007: 79)

In Zanzibari wedding or *Arbaini maulidi* this returned *baraka* is redirected to the couple or child respectively, but anyone participating, audience and performers alike, partake in the *baraka* that is generated by their combined effort.

3.4 TIME AND PLACE

3.4.1 Time

The Swahili Islamic calendar starts counting after Ramadan:

Swahili name	Arabic name	special events
Mfungo mosi	Shawwāl	1 st : Eid al-Fitr
Mfungo pili	Dhū al-qa‘dah	
Mfungo tatu	Dhū al-hijjah	10 th : Eid al-Hajj
Mfungo nne	Muḥarram	
Mfungo tano	Ṣafar	
Mfungo sita	Rabī‘ al-Awwal	12th: Maulidi
Mfungo saba	Rabī‘ al-Thānī	
Mfungo nane	Jumādā al-Ūlā	
Mfungo tisa	Jumādā al-Thaniā	
Rajab	Rajab	
Shaaban	Sha‘bān	
Ramadhani	Ramaḍān	(Fasting, Lailat al-Qadr)

Figure 3.02 Swahili and Arabic lunar months.

Auspiciousness is also an important factor in choosing the date of a wedding. Some months are considered inauspicious: During *Mfungo Nne and Nane* (fourth and eighths) weddings and thus *maulidis* are very scarce as it is believed that a marriage formed then will not last.⁵⁴

Auspicious times to get married are *Mfungo Tatu and Sita*, the third and sixth month. Many also take place during *Mfungo Tisa* in the lead-up to Ramadan because men want to be cooked for and eat special food during that time.

⁵⁴ Pers. comm. Mohammed Abdallah Rajab, September 2009, and Ibrahim, February 2010.

3.4.2 Place



Plate 3.10 Living-room *maulidi ya mtoto* with Bakathir (23.08.2008).

Maulidi performances are special events for the families that host them. Most *Arbainis* take place at private homes, usually in the living room, where most furniture is removed and *mabusati* ‘mats’ are laid out. Small-scale family *maulidi ya mfunjo sita* may also take place at private homes. Some weddings are also celebrated at the bride’s family home, but as they tend to have more guests, they would usually be in the courtyard, also laid out with *mabusati* for the guests and performers to sit on.

Almost all wedding *maulidis* at which Bakathir play take place at hired venues. Some of them are nurseries and schools, or even SUZA buildings (State University of Zanzibar). For the locations of these venues see the map in 2.4.

- Malindi Nursery, Malindi;
- Kidutani Nursery, Mkunazini;
- Shantimba Hall, Mombasa;
- Kwa Shamsu, Marekiti;
- Jamaatkhana,⁵⁵ Mkunazini;
- Sunni Madrasa, Mkunazini;
- Haile Selassie Secondary School, Vuga;
- Taasisi Language Institute, Vuga;

⁵⁵ A Jamaatkhana is the assembly house and mosque of the Ismaili community. They gather at the one in Kiponda. The Jamaatkhana situated at Mkunazini was never used by them as Jamaatkhana. It was constructed to serve as a *madrasa* for the children who live at that end of Stone Town but is today only rented out for *maulidis* and other functions (pers. comm. Farid Himid, April 2010).

Exclusively for festivities are:

Bwawani Hotel Salama Hall,
 Bwawani Hotel Pemba Bar,
 Palace Museum Garden,⁵⁶ Forodhani;
 Beit Al-Amin, Malindi.



Plate 3.11 Bakathir boys on a carpeted stage and the stage for the bride in the background (04.03.2010).

At villages, any type of *maulidi* mostly take place somewhere outside, in an open space between houses, or in classrooms in the local school. One especially delightful venue was a *maulidi ya dawa* at Marumbi, a small village in Chwaka Bay, where there was no power, the only source of light being one *karabai* 'pressure lamp' and the stars above. We were sitting on mats with the sea so close you could hear the waves. The performance started very late around 11 pm and finished after 2 am, when we all wandered through the dark for a meal of pilau rice.

The decorations for the stage where the bride will sit can be quite elaborate. Satin drapes and fake flowers are essentials, brass figurines and flashing lights may be added.

⁵⁶ The garden within the premises of the former Sultan's Palace is available for wealthy and influential families. I attended a wedding *maulidi* (24.7.2009) there with the Kilimani mixed group who are commonly associated with CCM due to their Army origins (Salma Salim, pers. comm. July 2009). The guest of honour was Zanzibar's First Lady Mama Salma Karume who brought along her friend Anna Mkapa, the former Tanzanian President's wife.



Plates 3.12 and 3.13 Bridal stages at Jamaatkhana, 11.06.2010 (above) and 18.06.2010 (below).



They are built for every occasion during a wedding where the bride is exhibited, each time in a different dress, e.g. kitchen party, dinner, *taarab*, and *rusha roho*. She comes in only at the end of the party, in the case of the *maulidi* after the actual performance, as a kind of climax to the event.



Plate 3.14 Bridal stage in the garden of the Palace Museum, 24.07.2009.

In Islam not even a mosque is a sacred space⁵⁷ but only a *masjid* 'a place of prostration.' The performers together with the audience form for the time of the performance a special space that is created by their interaction. This space is not a static bounded entity but a place made by social actors in a process. During *maulidi* this space where the common *nia* 'intention,' the participation in the recital of the *Barzanji* and *qasidas*, and in the *dua* at the end invoke *baraka* 'blessing.' This *baraka* is believed to protect the couple or child and ensure their well-being, prosperity, happiness and fertility in the future. Thus, *maulidi* ceremonies facilitate rites de passage in a way that they intend to minimise the risk and maximise the good in the status that is to be attained after the passage.

Hatuko hapa kwa sababu maulidi ni mazuri au mabaya. Tuko hapa kwa sababu ya Mtume Muhammad. (unknown *khatibu* at *Maulidi ya Mtume*, February 2011)

'We are not here because *maulidi* is good or bad. We are here because of the Prophet Muhammad.' This expresses very well the ultimate motive of performing a *maulidi* and especially the *maulidi ya mfungo sita*.



Plate 3.15 *Maulidi ya Mtume*, see the banner reading MILADIY-NNABIY 'The Prophet's Birthday,' Bakathir at Mchangani, 13.03.2010.

⁵⁷ With the exception of the three mosques in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem.

3.4 PERFORMANCE PROCEDURE

In both types of *maulidi* the distribution of voices is a key element. The chorus often repetitive and short chorus responses are easily overlooked but as Barua reminded the group in Morocco (05.06.2010) *maulidi ni kuitikia* ‘*maulidi* is to answer.’

3.4.1 *Maulidi ya Dufu (Barzanji)*

Performances take place either after *alasiri* ‘afternoon prayer’ (4 pm) or after *isha* ‘night prayer’ (8 pm).

The course of action for a *maulidi* is to some extent fixed but still adaptable. A *maulidi* performed by Bakathir on the evening of 09.04.2010 at the Haile Selassie Secondary School auditorium will illustrate the course of action. This specific *maulidi* was chosen because it is in many ways just an instance of an evening wedding *maulidi*. About two weeks earlier my field-notes state that I no longer felt a foreign object with the boys, as especially the younger boys who had kept a distance from me started talking and joking with me.



Plate 3.16 One of the small boys’ book and the invitation card laid out in front of Ibrahim, so that he can remember the song and the names of the couple that are inserted into the *qasida* (18.12.2009).

This case study is only an illustrative example of a *maulidi* that is not untypical. It will be complemented by a shorter description of a private *Maulidi ya Mtume* and references to other *maulidis* especially for contrast, to show a more complete range of possibilities within the framework.

During the *qasida* a woman of the bridal party approaches me to welcome me and invites me to dance with them. The *qasida* is closed with the second formula which is repeated by the group once after every *qasida* and after every chapter.

Allahumma ṣallī wa-sallim wa-bārik ʿalāyh

Oh Lord, send peace and blessing and benedictions on him

One of the younger boys is chosen by Ibrahim to recite the first chapter of the *Barzanji* (🎵 Track 4: Barzanji Chapters 1-3 Arabic). The book and microphone are passed on to him and he starts reading the introductory sentence:

Al-jannatu wa-naʿīmuḥā [...]

Paradise and its beatitude [...]

Some of the older boys join in the recitation pronouncing the last word loudly, rhyming in ‘-ah.’ Overlapping with this last word the whole group chants the two formulae that are alternated after each sentence:

Ṣallā Allāhu ʿalāyhi

May Allah send blessing upon him

Allahumma ṣallī wa-sallim ʿalāyh

Oh Allah send peace and blessing upon him

The chapter is closed by the third set of formulae, which is a rhymed refrain.

‘In more literary *mawlid* compositions, the invocation of blessings upon the Prophet is not merely a reproduction of the canonical formula but a rhymed couplet. Such couplets serve as distinctive refrains to the *mawlid* texts in which they appear. The refrain of the *mawlid* of Jaʿfar ibn Ḥasan al-Barzanjī [...], perhaps one of the texts most widely performed and revered in many parts of the Islamic world, likens the invocation of blessings upon the Prophet to the offering of incense or perfume to his grave: “O Lord, perfume his noble grave / With fragrant scents of prayer and greeting” [...] Probably as a result of the wide popularity of al-Barzanjī’s *mawlid*, such refrains came to be known as “*taṭīra*” (perfuming).’ (Katz 2007: 81)

The Arabic couplet says:

ʿAṭṭir allahumma qabrahū al-karīm,

Bi-ʿarfin shadhiyin min ṣalātin wa-taslīm

Oh Allah, perfume his noble grave,

With the fragrant scent of blessings and peace.

And here two or three of the older boys chime in with:

Wa-taʿdīma

And magnification

With *Hamdun* follows the second immutable staple of Bakathir. During the *qasida* the previously missing sound system – consisting of two microphones, an old cassette deck, and a loudspeaker – is brought and installed.

Chapter 2 is recited by Fom who came especially for this wedding of a relative of Nassir's.

The first wedding *qasida* in Swahili *Furaha Leo* is welcomed with animated dancing, giving of *tuzo* 'a gift (of money)' and *vigelegele* 'ululations' by the women.

After chapter 3 read by Othman, follows another favourite of Bakathir's wedding *qasidas*: *Harusana* 'Our bride' (🎵 Track 5) with the second part *Haya shangiria* 'Let us celebrate' which has slots for inserting the names of the bride and groom. This very fast, rhythmical section has the boys tired and sweaty.

As usual, chapter 4, which is the theological peak of the *maulidi*, is recited by Nassir in the Swahili *utenzi* version. See also chapter 5.2.2, listen to and watch 🎵 Tracks 6, 7, and 10, as well as 🎵 Tracks 8, 9, and 26 for *Kiyamu* 'Standing.'

After the fourth chapter it depends on the time available or the preference of the host if and how many more chapters of the *Barzanji* are recited. Normally they read five or six chapters for a wedding but only four or five for an *arbaini*. They continue alternating recitation and *qasida*. Ending in a *qasida* they finish by reading the *mlango wa dua ya Barzanji* 'chapter of *dua* of the *Barzanji*'⁶⁰ which starts with *Allahumma ya Bāṣiṭ* (🎵 Track 11).

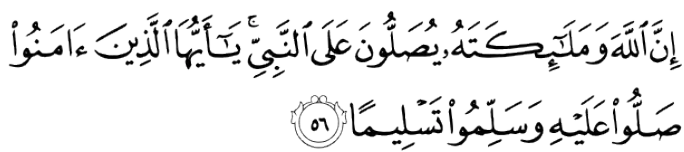
The very last part of the *dua* section is recited communally.

Ibrahim: Allahumma yā bāṣiṭ al-yadaīn al-ʿaṭiya. [...] li-ikhlāṣa al-niya.
Oh Allah, He of outstretched Hands of bestowing. [...We ask...] for sincerity of intention

Boys: Ya Allah.
Oh Allah.

Ibrahim: Wa-tunajiḥa li-kullin mina-l-ḥāḍirīna [...]
And we ask You to make the requests and hopes of everyone present successful [...]

⁶⁰ Although this is considered an integral part of the reading, the *dua* was not composed by al-Barzanji and it is not known when or by whom it was written. It includes blessings on the writer.

- Boys: Amīn.
Amen.
- Ibrahim: [...] wa-afḍali al-ṣalāti wa taslīm ‘alā sayidunā wa-mawlānā Muḥammad
May the best of blessings and salutations be upon our liege lord Muḥammad
- Boys joining in: khātami al-anbiyā’i wa-l-mursalīn, wa ‘alā ālihi wa-ṣaḥbihi ajma‘īn
The Seal of the Prophets, and upon his Family and Companions.
- Ibrahim: [Bi-faḍli]
[Please]
- All: Subḥāna Rabbika Rabb al-‘izzati ‘amma yaṣṣifūn. Wa-salāmūn ‘ala al-Mursalīna wa-l-ḥamdu li-Llāhi Rabbi l-‘ālamīn.⁶¹
Glory be to Thy Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power, (He is free) from what you ascribe (to Him)! And Peace on the Messengers! And Praise to Allah, the Lord and Cherisher of the World.
- 
- [Inna Llāha wa-malā’ikatahu yuṣalluna ‘alā an-nabī, ya ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ‘alayhi wa sallimū taslīma.]
God and His angels bless the Prophet so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace. (Quran 33:56)
- Āmīn.
- Ibrahim: [al qabūli al-Fātiḥa]
May it (the supplication) be accepted, al-Fatiha
- All: [Āmīn]

During all of this, the guests are well attended to: Firstly they are ‘cleaned’ with incense fumes, rosewater and a dab of perfume on the hand. A little later on food is served, usually *mshikaki* ‘kebab’ and *halwa* or ice cream and often coffee (meat, sweet, coffee). These days guests often get a small bag of food which contains also

⁶¹ All translations from the bilingual edition of the *Barzanji* by Othman (2009).

at least meat (*samosa*, *kuku* ‘chicken’) and a piece of cake, depending on financial situation, something to drink and a tissue. The group is given these *furushi* ‘food packets’ when leaving. This is considered *sadaqa* ‘charity’ which will add to the *baraka*.

After the group has left the hall, the bride enters. For an *arbaini*, however, the child is brought in during the second half of the ceremony.

A wedding *maulidi* lasts about 90 minutes and an *arbaini maulidi* about 70 minutes.

In the preface to his adaptation of the *Barzanji*, Seyyid Mansab describes a very similar set-up of a *maulidi* reading. Harries’ translation of the relevant passages is as follows:

‘Clear the place where the poem is recited * make it look pleasant with new cloths,
And your brethren should be in attendance * light the lamps and you will be happy.
If there is a Sharif where you are * give him a thurible for him to put incense in,
Recite the ‘fatiha’ in a proper manner * and then start on my composition.
[...]
It is better to offer something sweet or even coffee * aloe wood and rose water had better be sprinkled,
Particularly at the time when the Birth takes place * it serves as a good omen and a gesture of respect.’ (verses 5,6 & 13; Harries 1958: 31)

The following is a model of a typical *maulidi* performance by Bakathir. The *qasida* slots are marked in green.

group leader	group	audience	
<i>dua</i> and Al-Fātiḥa	Amīn		
Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alā Muḥammad	Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam		x3
Ya Rabbi sallī (<i>qasida ya ufunguzi</i> ‘opening <i>qasida</i> ’)		sing along	
	Chapter 1		
Arabic <i>qasida</i> on Muhammad (<i>ḥamdun</i> ‘praise’)		sing along	
	Chapter 2		
Swahili <i>qasida</i> (<i>Maulidi</i> or Wedding)		sing along	
	Chapter 3		
Swahili <i>qasida</i> (<i>Maulidi</i> or Wedding)		sing along	
	Chapter 4 pt 1 Arabic (wa lamma tamma) pt 2 Swahili (Ewe Mola msalie)		
Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alā Muḥammad	Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam		x3
Marḥabā yā nūr aīnī (<i>qasida ya kiyama</i> ‘standing-up <i>qasida</i> ’)		sing along	standing
	Chapter 4 pt 3 Arabic (wa muhayyan ka shamsi) pt 4 Swahili (Na hapa pamesuniwa)		
Ya Rabbi ṣallī ‘alā al-nabī man ja’anā bī al-risālah		sing along	
	Chapter 6		
Swahili <i>qasida</i> (<i>Maulidi</i> or Wedding)		sing along	
Dua Chapter (Allahumma ya bāṣit)	Yā Allāh Amīn <i>End part recited together</i>		
Al-Fatiha	Amīn		
<i>dua</i>	Amīn		

Figure 3.03 Bakathir performance outline.

The opening *qasida* ‘Ya Rabbi ṣallī,’ the *qasida ya kiyama*, and the one following the fourth chapter entitled ‘Ya Rabbi ṣallī ‘alā al-nabī’ are all compositions by ‘Alawī sheikhs.

Thus the key *qasida* slots are all held by ones that are:

in Arabic,
praise the Prophet, and
composed by ‘Alawīs,

stressing these three features and in turn marking the slots and *qasidas*. The whole performance is permeated by ‘Alawī poetry, a fact ignored by the vast majority of performers.

Formulae are often described as separating regular and artistic discourses. However, in *maulidi* performances the stage setting, special dress, the use of microphones, the burning of incense and aloe wood and even more so the quality of voice, singing or recitation, already set *maulidi* discourse apart. Formulae therefore are not necessary to distinguish *maulidi* as ordinary speech but they do certainly signal beginning and end of a reading, as well as the transitions between *qasidas*, chapters, and supplications, but rather as *conducting* the group and audience. They ensure the clarity of the internal structure of *maulidi* and thus play a part in the controlling of emotion. Even though the formulae might not be needed, they function as magic to enter the ritual space and time. This rigid patterning is a powerful example for the power of words to make a ritual, both religiously and organisationally.

3.4.2 *Maulidi ya Homu*

A *Maulidi ya Homu* performance is even more complicated to fix on paper because of the additional levels of dancing and a greater number of roles. A typical *Maulidi ya Homu* starts sometime after *isha*, around 8.30 or 9 pm, as they can only take place in the dark. They last much longer than *maulidi ya dufu*, at least two to three hours. Each *dahala* ‘section,’ of which there are usually three, lasts about 45 to 50 minutes. Between *dahalas* the dancers have to rest their knees for 10 to 15 minutes

and have a drink.⁶² The younger boys start out dancing and as the evening progresses they are replaced by older ones.

The performance is opened with a communal recitation of shorter suras from the Qur'an (usually the last three, al-Ikhlāṣ, al-Falaq, An-Nās and the Fātiḥa). Then the group commences with an a capella intro led by the *khalifa* or *msomaji* 'reader,' who establishes a basic rhythm and tone, which gradually crescendos into a sound that fills the entire space. The voice is later accompanied by an ever faster rhythm by beating on a brass tray with wooden sticks. The second component are arm and hand movements performed by a row of men and boys of all ages, dressed in white *kanzu* 'djellabiya' and *kofia* 'hats,' in the front. The *rusi*, or leader of the group's physical motions coordinates this part of the group. The remaining performers stand in a second row behind them, they sing the chorus parts and dance swaying from side to side. As a third and final component the voice and movements are joined by *matari* 'frame drums.'

They start out calmly and slowly, gradually increasing in volume, tempo and dynamism of movement, up to an animated climax, characterising each of these sections called *dahala* (listen to 🎵 Track 13 for an example). A performance generally consists of three or four *dahalas* and is closed by another communal recitation of suras and a *dua* 'supplication.'

One person also serves as the *shawishi* 'group's waiter' who throughout the performance burns *udi* 'aloe wood' and *ubani* 'incense' and sprinkles *marashi* 'rosewater' over the performers and the audience.

In the same ways as *maulidi ya dufu*, the performance is structured internally by a set of formulae that mark the beginning and end of the *maulidi* and its sections. Even their wording is not dissimilar, owing to the fact that these formulae all point to the primary aim of *maulidi*, they are predominantly invocations of blessings on the Prophet.

A detailed outline of a *Maulidi ya Homu* performance looks like this:

⁶² In addition to the in-built respites the group customarily rests on the next day unless there is another performance.

Section type	<i>Khalifa</i>	chorus	rep.
opening	Communal recitation Al-Fātiḥa Al-Sharḥ al-Ikhlāṣ al-Falaq An-Nās		
		Allahumma salli ala Muhammad ya Rabbi salli alayhim wa sallim	x2
	Al-Fātiḥa!	recitation	
		one: <i>Dua</i> – all: Amin	
dahala 1	Wa Salaam	Allahumma salli ala habib Muhammad Eh ala ali Muhammad yusalli wa yusallim alayh	x2
	<i>kisomo</i> 'reading'	responses	
	qasidas: Allah Allah Ya Allah Allah Ya Karim Ashiraka al-badru Allah Ya Salam Marihaba Allahuu Muhammadi Sirati Ya Mtume Tabaraka Allah Nampenda Mtume wangu Jalla Jallaluh Allahu hua Maulana Hua Maulana hua Allah Allah Ya Rabbi Salama Allah hua Maulana Laitatul-qadiri silali naingojea Mwana Amina Swala Jalla Jallaluh Hamsa hamsa arikanu isilami		
	Wa Salaam	Allahumma salli ala habib Muhammad Eh ala ali Muhammad yusalli wa yusallim alayh	
Pause			

dahala 2	Wa Salaam	Allahumma salli ala habib Muhammad Eh ala ali Muhammad yusalli wa yusallim alayh	x2
	kisomo 'reading'	responses	
	qasidas: Allah Allah Ya Allah Allah Ya Karim Ashiraka al-badru Allah Ya Salam ...		
	Wa Salaam	Allahumma salli ala habib Muhammad Eh ala ali Muhammad yusalli wa yusallim alayh	
Pause			
dahala 3	same as above		
dua & Fātiḥa			

Figure 3.04 *Maulidi ya Homu* detailed performance outline.

During each *dahala* 'section' *qasidas* are sung in a medley-like fashion, one merging into the next. The *qasidas* are either in Arabic or Swahili and their subject matter includes the praise of God, the Prophet Muhammad, descriptions of the duties of Muslims, and knowledge of heaven and hell, and life in general (see also chapter 4). Although, according to Barua (pers. comm. August 2009) it is a cultural performance, the religious benefits are highlighted, as those hosting the performance hope to receive *baraka* 'blessings' and the social respect of celebrating within a community.

Differences of local context and stage performance

The Mtendeni group also performs on stage, in a context very different from the *Maulidi ya Mfungo Sita*, wedding or *dawa maulidi*. This can be either for a local audience, e.g. during (government organised) small festivals, or for an international audience that is largely unfamiliar with *Maulidi ya Homu*, or indeed Swahili culture. In order to accommodate the distinct demands of a stage performance they make some alterations to the duration and number of the parts that constitute a regular *Maulidi ya Homu*.

The table below contrasts the differences between a local context and a stage performance *Maulidi ya Homu*:

local context outline	stage performance outline
recitation of shorter <i>suras</i>	
<i>Dua</i> & <i>Fatiha</i>	(backstage) <i>dua</i>
	walk on stage
Dahala 1 <i>kisomo</i> 'reading' <i>qasidas</i> drumming	Dahala 1 short <i>kisomo</i> <i>qasidas</i> drumming
Dahala 2	Dahala 2
Dahala 3	
<i>Dua</i> & <i>Fatiha</i>	

Figure 3.05 *Maulidi ya Homu*: local context and stage performance elements.

The strictly and more overtly religious parts are left out for the more mundane stage performance but when I travelled with the group to the Festival des Musiques Sacrées in Fes in June 2010 they did their *suras* and *dua* backstage before going on stage. Also, *nia* 'intention' is crucial to all actions. In their hearts, they will have *nia* for this type of performance as well, although rather than blessing the bride and groom, or seeking to heal a patient they wish to give a great performance. Through this the *maruhani* 'spirits' are present.

Another reason for leaving out some parts is that it has to be shorter and more animated (zestier) so they leave out the 'boring' recitations.

As *Maulidi ya Homu* is not only a religious (*dini*), but also a cultural or traditional (*utamaduni*) and musical performance, they can easily leave out some elements (the basic set up of *khalifa*, dancers, standing chorus and drummers remains the same) and create a performance that will appeal to audiences who are not familiar with *maulidi*. However, the group, especially older members think it is important for them to stick to their slow start not just go straight to the amazing fast movements. The reasons for this are, firstly, a local performance will last several hours and the dancers could not sustain a very high speed over a long duration; secondly, it

corresponds to it being a musically slow start in volume (voice-only) and speed; thirdly, the *Maulidi ya Homu* tradition is to always begin slowly; and lastly, only a slow start enables them to have a greater and more noticeable increase and thus more variety within the performance.

3.5 Music

Qasida are either a capella or accompanied by *madufu* or *matari* ‘frame drums’ and rarely *nai* ‘flute’ as orthodox interpretations of Islam do not allow the use of other musical instruments.⁶³

Even though the singing voice is physiologically different from the speaking voice, and thus song (as the act of singing and as a musical entity) could be defined as the conscious shaping of human utterance in the singing voice, local tradition refuses to describe *qasida* as ‘music’ or analogous to secular singing. This distinction between the two types is reflected in the usage of terms as well. No Swahili would refer to *maulidi* or *qasida* as being sung by *–imba* ‘sing,’ rather they say *–soma* ‘read, recite.’ A third term, the Arabic loan *–ghani* ‘sing, recite,’ however, may be used in both contexts. More specifically *–ghani* refers to a melismatic improvisation in the Arabic style.⁶⁴

In addition to the modulation of the voice, instruments augment the musical quality of *qasida*. For the most part, differently sized *matari* ‘drums’ from soprano to bass used in Swahili *qasida* create compelling rhythmic lines (Graebner 2003: 11).⁶⁵ In recent years, a small number of groups have attempted to ‘modernise’ *qasida* by the introduction of keyboards and other instruments (Mwalimu Mohamed, Amani Qādiriya, Tarbiya), resulting in a more electrified and louder style (*disco al-nabī*).

⁶³ One Hadith from *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that is quoted to justify this standpoint is the following:

‘Narrated Abu Amīr or Abu Malik Al-Ash‘ārī: that he heard the Prophet saying, “From among my followers there will be some people who will consider illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk, the drinking of alcoholic drinks and **the use of musical instruments**, as lawful. And there will be some people who will stay near the side of a mountain and in the evening their shepherd will come to them with their sheep and ask them for something, but they will say to him, ‘Return to us tomorrow.’ Allah will destroy them during the night and will let the mountain fall on them, and He will transform the rest of them into monkeys and pigs and they will remain so till the Day of Resurrection.”’ (Volume 7, Book 69, Number 494)

⁶⁴ Pers. comm. Werner Graebner, August 2011. See also 4.4.2.

⁶⁵ The drums are tuned on site by pushing strings made of old cloths between the frame and the covering with wooden wedges. Sometimes the strings are moistened with water or rosewater for a better hold.

The use of instruments depends on the group and the occasion: For the *akdi* ‘wedding contract’ at the mosque or home there is no instrumentation and the singing style is slower and calmer. Otherwise most *madrasas* perform at weddings and *arbaini* using *madufu*.

A number of *qasidas* that are much liked (many of them old ones) are performed by many groups; often to different *mahadhi* melodies/rhythms. Even one group may have several versions of one *qasida*.

The scales that are used are Swahili versions of Arabic *maqāmāt*⁶⁶ just like the ones used in *taarab* (Topp 1992: 128), however there are internal diversities and idiosyncrasies both in the naming and actualisation of these. These are part of a local musical landscape but not usually theorised even by the performers themselves (pers. comm. Werner Graebner, March 2012). The performers of *qasida* are not aware of the existence of *maqāmāt*, they compose the melodic patterns intuitively (Ibrahim Bakar, April 2010). Similarly, the *mipigo* ‘rhythms’ are largely employed intuitively, but there is a major difference to the melodies: there are specific rhythms used only in *qasida*. Some of them have names; *zaffa* for example is a *mpigo* used for processions. The introduction of a rhythm from another genre thus blurring the boundaries between *qasida* and *ngoma* is not acceptable to most performers and audiences (see below).

Kwa kauli nyingi za mashehe walizoshindana

Kwa kupigwa dufu maulidi ni jaizi sana

Jaizi sana jaizi sana kwa kupigwa dufu maulidi ni jaizi sana (K3: 7-9)

*In the words of a majority of sheikhs who competed with each other,
A drum being played for maulidi is very permissible.*

Very permissible, very permissible, a drum being played for maulidi is very permissible

The various combinations of melodic and rhythmic patterns and instrumentation result in the following four types of styles: A capella, *madufu* and *nai*, *ki-modern*, and experimental. Even though the kind of instrumentation clearly determines in which category a certain *qasida* falls, the distinction is not always that straightforward. Depending on the context, place and occasion, the text of a *qasida*

⁶⁶ Indian influences are less frequent or obvious: The singing style and some melodic patterns resemble Bollywood songs (Ibrahim Bakar, August 2009) that are popular in East Africa through films and radio.

can be performed a capella, with drums, and even ki-modern, by the same group. For example, the Amani group would perform the same wedding *qasida* a capella inside a mosque for an *akdi* 'marriage contract ceremony', with drum at a wedding *maulidi*, and with the addition of keyboard for the recording. Instrumentation is thus another important factor within the matrix of features that constitute a *qasida*.

3.5.1 A Capella

When *qasida* are performed at the mosque, where the playing of drums would be considered frivolous, they are usually a capella and at a slower pace adapting the style to the more solemn location. The occasion would be an *akdi* (Ar. *nikāḥ*), the ceremony during which the wedding contract is signed. The mourning ceremonies, *mazishi* 'burial' and *hitma* the memorial gathering six days after someone's decease include the chanting of *qasida* at the end, also slow and without instrumental accompaniment to mark the gravity of the occasion.

For an *arbaini* the memorial forty days after the burial a *maulidi* may be read with the usual alternating chapters and *qasidas* but without drums and usually at a distance from the bereaved.

Analogous to the cantillation of *qasida* is the recitation of the Qur'an as both are not perceived as singing: 'Even if scholarly tradition has not wanted to identify Qur'ān recitation with musical performance, the aesthetic power of the melodically recited scripture has been, so far as we can judge, an undeniable fact of Muslim piety and practice from the earliest days of Islam to the present moment. The recited Qur'ān is and has ever been the epitome of aesthetic as well as spiritual perfection for the faithful' (Graham & Kermani 2008: 132-133). Both of these aspects are intimately linked to the Arabic language: 'The inherent sacrality of the original Arabic sounds [...] is eloquently affirmed. The sense of the holiness, or *baraka* ('blessing'), of the sounded holy text seems to penetrate into every corner of the Islamic world' (Graham & Kermani 2008: 121).

Zanzibari *maulidis* and *qasidas* are in Arabic as well as Swahili. In them, the sacrality of Arabic and the intelligibility of Swahili complement each other. Every *maulidi* contains a number of stock Arabic phrases or formulae, the readings from the

Barzanji, and at least two or three core Arabic *qasidas* as well as *qasidas* and sometimes recitations of chapter 4 in Swahili. The complementary nature of the two languages extends even within single *qasidas* (most frequently found in Swahili stanzas and Arabic refrain).

Listen to and watch 🎵 Tracks 4, 7, 10, and 20.

3.5.2 *Madufu and Nai*

This is certainly the most common style. The majority of groups use *madufu* at all occasions with the exception of the above mentioned performances inside a mosque or for memorial services.

Originally only four *madufu* were used in Zanzibar. Mwalimu Mohammed claims to have introduced the use of more, normally six or eight, from Kilwa and to have taught Zanzibari (among them Bakathir) how to play complex rhythmic patterns. Therefore *Msolopa* was the ‘original’ and most liked. This was reflected by people asking for ‘*qasida ya Msolopa*’ as a style description.

Today, the use of six drums is the norm for *Maulidi ya Barzanji*, which is why it is sometimes referred to as *maulidi ya dufu*. Each drum size has a name; from largest to smallest they are called:

- 1) *dabo besi* (fr. double bass)
- 2) *besi* (fr. bass)
- 3) *sixi* (fr. six)
- 4) *dokozi*
- 5) *mchanganyo/solo*
- 6) *Kitwas*



Plates 3.17 and 3.18 *Madufu*: lying inverted in-between *qasidas* (left, 04.12.2009) and being played (right, 28.08.2008).

In *Maulidi ya Homu* only three *madufu* are played. Before the *madufu* are introduced one by one, two smaller drums, here called *ruwasi* of similar size to the smallest *dufu* in the set of six, are softly introduced by players standing up. The *madufu* are all played by one person only, with a helper stabilising them. Mtendeni use antelope skin for their drums, not the usual goat's skin, and they are frequently asked why their *madufu yanalia sana* 'drums sing so nicely.'

The addition of *nai* 'flute', which would still fall into this category, has become quite widespread in the *Ng'ambo* areas, though both Bakathir and Msolopa do not have *nai*. Due to its gentle sound, the *nai* is perfect for melodic intros and interludes.

Listen to and watch 🎵 Tracks 1-3, 5, 19, 21-22, and 26 (*maulidi ya dufu*);

and 🎵 Tracks 13-17, and 27 (*Maulidi ya Homu*).

3.5.3 *KiModern*⁶⁷

The so-called modern style uses electronic instruments, i.e. keyboards and drum machines. The locally available recordings, including the very first that came out *Chози la Ngamia* 'The camel's tear,' are in this style.

Listen to and watch 🎵 Tracks 24-25, and 28-30.

⁶⁷ Mwalimu Mohamed used this term when talking about what the group's plans for the future were.

The private corporation ZCTV that runs a number of TV channels⁶⁸ broadcast a video-clip of the Zanzibari group *Cholo Qanun* every day during Ramadan 2008: *Karibu Ramadhan* ‘Welcome Ramadhan’ composed by Yusuf Khamis.

Like other Swahili musical genres, e.g. *taarab*, *qasida* are heavily influenced by Arabic *maqāmāt* and to a slightly lesser extent by Arabic rhythms.

The heavily electrified Indonesian *modern kasida* that are easily available as sound or video recordings and often broadcast on the radio and TV are a major influence for this style. Many of these video clips are sing-along versions with the lyrics inserted at the bottom of the screen, a technique that has recently started to appear in East African *qasida* videos as well. This popular style will be further analysed in conjunction with text chapters 4 and 5, but more so in chapter 7. See also the discussion of acceptability below (3.4.6).

3.5.4 Experimental

Tarbiya Islamiya and Rajab Suleiman team *qanun* with *qasida* and therefore cross genre boundaries between *taarab* and *qasida*. This not a style that is present in the local discourse, recordings, or indeed at *maulidis*.

Listen to 🎵 Track 10: *Amina*.

3.5.5 Boundaries of Acceptability⁶⁹

Sheikh A. and the Amani *madrasa* – Two Qādiriyya branches:

The Qādiriyya *madrasa* in Amani, led by Hamad Bakari Mohamed, is known for its *qasidas*, and all the children learn to sing. Their *maulidi* group is frequently invited to perform both in town and in villages. They are most famous for their *qasida* recordings; they published several volumes in a series called *Mwangaza wa Qadiriyya* ‘The light of the Qādiriyya.’ The probably first ever Zanzibari commercial

⁶⁸ The service relays numerous international channels, mostly news, movies, music and sport. There is at least one Islamic channel and several channels featuring ‘home produced’ content of local interest.

⁶⁹ See also 1.4.2 and 2.5.

qasida recording (circa 1998) is also by them, entitled *Chozi la Ngamia* 'The Camel's Tear.' All of their recordings use *nai* and keyboards.

I was told that Sheikh A. who is one of the most prominent Qādirī sheikhs in Zanzibar, had been invited to speak at one of their functions in early 2009. He said he could not tolerate their type of *qasida* and left (pers. comm. Abubakar Mikidad, May 2010). Neither he himself nor Hamad Bakari would confirm this but they did not deny it either, even on further inquiry. A. refers to a Hadith stating that except for drums no instruments were allowed. This was because instrumentation was at the root of problematic behaviour caused by people *kutoka kwenye hisia za dini* 'moving away from religious feelings,' namely the wearing of wrong clothes and the mixing of men and women. Hamad said that A. had later apologised to them, which he himself denied. He elucidates their style by saying that they were merely developing the way the message of Islam was transmitted. *Qādiriyya yangu ni mfumo wa dhikiri* 'My Qādiriyya is the system of *dhikr*' and *dhikr* was at the origin of *qasida*. As for the drums, the *madufu* had always been there with their specific rhythms. Today, new and 'modern' rhythms are added but the message and its sources remain unchanged.

Some *qasidas* are sung to melodies of songs by Umm Kulthum or even Asha Bhosle! This is not seen as problematic, whereas the use of local *taarab* or *ngoma* songs (for example *Leo ni leo*) or their melodic patterns (example of Comorian *mshago*) is frowned upon:

Wanaharibu mambo ya qasida.

'They destroy *qasida*' with their *uhuni*.' Mwalimu Muhammad Salim Muhammad (August 2008).

And more generally:

Leo qasida zimetawaliwa na madufu.

'Today *qasidas* are ruled by drums.' Dedes (04.09.2008).

Two points about acceptability become apparent in these remarks: Instrumentation and closeness to the local context. What is considered too much instrumentation (anything other than *madufu* and *nai*), too centred on drumming (and dancing) or the wrong type of rhythms and/or melodies. It appears that what is a boundary of acceptability for types of rhythms and melody also holds true for texts in cross-genre intertextuality. While it is acceptable, to a degree at least, to borrow from

qasidas across groups, for *qasida* groups to incorporate melodic and rhythmic themes of other local Zanzibari genres, such as *taarab* or *ngoma*, are deemed off-limits. All informants said that musical loans from other genres could not be used in *qasida* was because they were secular genres. They presented a clear-cut distinction between secular and religious genres, and their corresponding religious and secular rhythms and melodies. The opposition between the two concepts – religious and secular – is certainly telling but not as uncomplicated as articulated. Lyrics of *taarab* (and even *Bongo Flava*, see chapter 7) songs use religious language and express religious concepts and ideas. Rather than a dichotomy there is a continuum of musical and literary genres between the two poles of religious and secular. As a genre, *qasida* is depicted and perceived by many as radically different in meaning and intent.

Thus, in turn if something is considered unacceptable, it is a different genre.

3.6 MOVEMENTS / DANCING

When the description of the Prophet's birth is reached the group stands up. This fourth chapter and the *qasidas* are also called *mlango wa kiyama* and *qasida za kiyama*. While standing they sway from right to left (watch 🎵 Tracks 8-9 and 26). The rest of the time the boys sit cross-legged and rocking back and forth or sideways only barely. Mainly in order to relieve the legs they change to kneeling at a signal of the leader/teacher. In this position the moving is slightly more animated. Ibrahim calls this *kucheza kistaarabu* 'to dance in a civilised manner.' Most of the girls dance much more elaborately and vigorously, except the ones who play the *madufu*. Kneeling down they move from left to right and up and down in complex patterns while additionally bending their heads at 'breakneck' speed.



Plates 3.19 and 3.20 The Msolopa girls dancing vigorously, Jamaatkhana 22.05.2010.

In *Maulidi ya Homu* the men also dance to an intricate choreography both while sitting and standing. The front line group is the visual centre of attention: kneeling down they slowly start with poised hand movements and gradually introduce the head and the whole body.

Watch 🎵 Tracks 15-17 and 27.



Plate 3.21 Sitting position at the very beginning of the first *dahala*, Taasisi 05.10.2009.

The choreography of movements is composed of smaller segments each with names that are being announced by the *rusi* who chooses whichever choreographic unit he sees fit to the intensity of singing.

The movements range from gentle gestures with hands and head to motions reminiscent of Muslim prayer to a fast to and fro clasp of each other's arms and rhythmical clapping over the head.



Plates 3.22 and 3.23 Slow hand-movements at a wedding *maulidi* in a private home in Mbweni on 10.12.2009, the day the lights went out.

The *kofia* 'hats' may also be laid out in front of the dancers then waved around holding them with the teeth.



Plates 3.24 and 3.25 *Kofia* choreography at Marumbi 25.07.2009 and at Taasisi, 05.10.2009.

Another unit includes the dancers bending backwards and lying down completely before rising up again.



Plate 3.26 Quick movements at Masjid Taqwa, 10.02.2010.

The sometimes acrobatic quality of movements demands stamina and zest of the dancers. All the while singing chorus lines as well they perform an amazingly varied and intricate choreography.

3.7 FUN & AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION



Plate 3.27 Bakathir and audience in full swing at the Bwawani Hotel, 04.03.2010.

The lasting appeal of *maulidi* celebrations, even a rise in its popularity (see 1.4.2), are evidence of how much audiences enjoy the performance. Despite, or maybe because of its rigid structure and repetitive nature, and other factors such as gender segregation *maulidi* provide a platform for familiar and socially acceptable partying. Without doubt the joyous occasion of the *maulidi* and the paraphernalia of celebrating (dressing up, putting on make-up, etc.), timing (after the day's work is done), and getting together with friends and family all contribute to the enjoyment. But no party without the live music, well-known and popular *qasidas*, and vigorous dancing.

Audience participation is part and parcel of *maulidi*; their intention and active participation are integral to its performance. Just as their enjoyment is one of the performers' main purposes (pers. comm. Nassir and Ayoub, May 2010). During the three-months blackout from December 2009 to March 2010, the women attending *maulidis* seemed to be quite seriously determined to enjoy themselves for lack of other distractions in the evenings.

The audience participates in *maulidi* by dancing when the drumming starts, giving *tuzo*,⁷⁰ and singing along. The dancing can get quite animated: Once with the girls' group from Kilimani the women almost 'trampled us' (Aziza).

Everybody present participates in *dua* by a specific hand-gesture, repeating 'amin' after every sentence and by their intention. The communal nature of *dua* is especially evident in *uradi*.⁷¹

Sometimes a chapter of the *maulidi* is read by a member of the audience at their own request.



Plates 3.28 and 3.29 Audience participation in the form of reading a chapter (04.03.2010, above) and dancing, giving *tuzo* and singing along (below, 05.10.2009).

⁷⁰ *Tuzo* lit. 'gift' is a donation of money to a performer by someone from the audience to express their appreciation of the performers skill or the words. It may also be used to communicate with someone who is present, 'talking' to them with the words that are uttered during giving the *tuzo*.

⁷¹ *Uradi* is a prayer ceremony (for a soon-to-be bride). The term *uradi* derives from the Arabic *wird* 'litany.'



The visually stunning dance choreography of Maulidi ya Homu as described above (3.6) has never failed to leave onlookers transfixed. Due to the great complexity, not only of the dancing, but also of the music and their interplay, the deep enjoyment of a performance grows with increasing familiarity.

Yet, not only the audience enjoys the performance, the performers themselves delight in making music together, especially when the audience is having fun. The intricate rhythmic patterns played on the drums requires skillful playing and concentration on the other players. Learning to play *dufu* takes time and practice. The relationship between a drummer and his drum becomes close, as Ayoub expressed in *mimi na dufu, dufu na mimi* 'me and the *dufu*, the *dufu* and me.' Even when they have mastered drumming, players still need to concentrate on what they and the others are doing. Through this combination of familiarity, deep focus, and rhythm flow, a mental state of full involvement and enjoyment in an activity, is produced. Singing, especially in a group, can have similar effects. This includes the singing along of the audience. Even more so the combination of rhythmic movement and singing intensifies the state of flow. This is evident in Maulidi ya Homu: Even during rehearsals in the cramped *madrasa*, once the group was in full swing, they almost did not want to stop. And this although the dancing is physically exhausting and their knees hurt after long *dahalas*. It is even more noticeable after performances: in the car on the way back from the venue they would continue to chant *qasidas*, mostly refrains, over and over again and sometimes even dance.

Singing *qasidas* is immensely fun for both audiences and performers, who simultaneously party and praise the Prophet.

3.8 CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen above, each performance follows a relatively fixed outline that can be described as a grid structure. The fixity of this structure is also one of the features that make *maulidi* a ritual (cf. 1.5). The nodes or joints are formulae that signal transitions. *Allahumma ṣallī wa-sallim wa-bārik ‘alāyh* closes every *qasida* and opens every chapter of the *Barzanji*. The formula *ṣallā Allahu ‘alā Muḥammad, ṣallā Allahu ‘alayhi wa-sallim*, repeated three times, introduces the two most important moments: the beginning of every performance and the *qasida ya kiyama*. The in-between slots are filled by precomposed *qasidas*, ranging from whole songs to small sections. Even some of the slots for *qasidas*, the two *Ya Rabbi*, are predetermined for every performance. Some restrictions can limit the use of specific *qasidas* in some slots and possible sequences but not usually the number of repetitions in *Maulidi ya Homu* whereas Msolopa uses free play and often repeats the same sections again and again in a single performance. Generally one can say that the beginning of each whole performance in *Maulidi ya Dufu (Barzanji)* and of each *dahala* for *Maulidi ya Homu* is the same every time both concerning the recitation or song-parts and the dance movements. After these absolutely fixed parts a freer combination of pre-composed sections of *qasida* is sung according to the choice of the *khalifa*. However, there are certain *qasida* that are supposed to be slower and quieter and others that are seen as faster and louder, therefore the first comes before the last. The same is true for the dance sections. Often, the very last *qasida* is *Leo mambo, na kesho mambo* ‘Problems today, and problems tomorrow’ which is accompanied by the choreographic unit called *faya* ‘fire.’

Similarly the beginning of a *Maulidi ya Dufu (Barzanji)* performance is very fixed, always starting with the same *qasida*, and then allowing for choice later in the performance.

In both types of *maulidi* the performance is characterised by a gradual increase or climaxing of speed, volume and flexibility. This is true within the smaller segments – *qasidas* and *dahalas* – and for the overall performance.

The breaks between *dahalas* as well as the chapter recitals between *qasidas* are a significant part of staging *maulidi* in a way that allows for excitement but not trance

or 'over-excitement.' Performers and to a lesser degree the audiences get into a 'flow,' a feeling of energised focus and full involvement in the activity, a kind of rapture. Boyd describes this aptly as 'a dynamic tension between the control of emotion, the expression of devotion and competition' (1981: 86).

The high degree of fixity especially in *Maulidi ya Dufu (Barzanji)* across groups – and time – is precisely what allows some groups to experiment and innovate with the *qasidas* that go into the flexible slots. The fixity of structure is also mirrored in the inner structure of songs, that are either whole precomposed *qasidas* with stanzas and refrain or single stanzas with refrain taken from these *qasidas*, and in the language, that is conventional and relies heavily on rhyme and repetition. Just as *qasida* and fixity are key elements of both *maulidi* as a whole and single *qasidas*, so are flexibility and playfulness. Adhering to the general framework of *maulidi* allows composers and performers to play around with the features; balancing a fine line of acceptability.

The continued appeal of live performances is based on a number of factors. Before the group starts and after they have finished (in a wedding *maulidi* when the bride comes in) recordings of Arabic, Swahili and sometimes Indonesian *qasidas* are played very loudly. Of the locally available compilations for this purpose the one called *Sherehe ya Harusi* 'Wedding Feast' is probably the most successful; it assembles two Arabic classics and Zanzibari *qasidas* by various groups. However, there are no *maulidis* in *rusha roho* style, a wedding celebration where a sound system that plays *taarab* songs has replaced the live orchestra performance. One reason for this is that the *qasida* groups are considerably cheaper than orchestras; their affordability is undoubtedly a factor in the rise of the genre (cf. Introduction). A second factor is the effectiveness of *baraka*. There are two lines of reasoning behind the necessity of live readings as an actualisation of *maulidi*.

Firstly theologically: As in language absent things, concepts and persons become present, through the recounting of his life the Prophet Mohammed is spiritually there with the performers and audience who together create the space where he exists (el Zein 1974:42).⁷² Albeit not sacred this *maulidi* space which is created by

⁷² This ties in well with the saying *Lisemwalo lipo* 'What is said, is there.'

their interaction within the clearly marked boundaries of performance and through the common *nia* 'intention,' is where the *baraka* 'blessing' is generated.

'The salvific power of the invocation of blessings on the Prophet was such that it could be understood as a major objective of *mawlid* recitation.' (Katz 2007:80)

The complementary nature of the two languages, the sacrality of Arabic sound and the intelligibility of Swahili, adds to this salvific power.

By virtue of this communal actualisation of praising and wishing well the *baraka* is bestowed on the Prophet and by extension on the couple or child. Over time, as *maulidi* became broadened to weddings and *arbaini*, the invocations of blessings upon the Prophet were adapted to aim more specifically at the couple or child.

Secondly, live music is always more direct, real, rhythmical, 'live' – alive and therefore more enjoyable especially for a performance that includes visually aesthetic action. This entertainment aspect of *maulidi* became very evident during the three months without electricity when there was little alternative for entertainment at night. During this time the audiences seemed determined to have a good time.

The repetitive nature of *qasida* performances both within a single event and the *maulidi* itself brings security to the performers as well as to audiences. The physical aspect of *maulidi*, i.e. movements (dancing, playing the drums) and sensory experience (*udi, ubani*), in combination with the before-mentioned repetition contribute to one being so accustomed to these that no cognitive effort is needed to act. This physical state called 'flow' can occur in any type of *maulidi* but it is especially relevant in the context of *Maulidi ya Homu* due to the rigorous dancing rehearsals. This relaxation of the cognitive capabilities is why the texts can be so didactic or extra-cognitive.

The importance of performance cannot be stressed enough and it clearly plays a part in the construction of meaning. As Barber states: '[...] "text" (the detachable, de-contextualised stretch of discourse) and "performance" (the act of assembling and mobilising discursive elements) are two sides of a coin, inseparable and mutually constitutive' (2003: 331).

Thus, the performative and textual dimensions complement each other and can only be analytically separated as in reality all happens in parallel – levels of

meaning, interpretation and context. A further difficulty is that the experiential side is not easily graspable and therefore only described with difficulty.

As Barber further points out every performance is 'a performance of something' (2003: 331). A performance of a text. This is what will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Texts



In this chapter we look at thematic contents, language use, and formal features of *qasida*; i.e. the formulaic language used and its relationship to the Swahili poetic tradition and other genres. The chapter moves from the meta-level of topics and values, via the macro-level of textual organisation and patterning, to the micro-level of style and language use.

After these basics are established I move on to interpretations of whole *qasidas* and parts of *qasidas* that are used individually in the following chapter. These smaller segments that are recombined with others in performance will be called *tesserae* after the individual tiles in mosaics.

Qasida are composed in *mashairi*⁷³ ‘verse’ and thus *zinalingana uzuri na ufahamu* ‘combine beauty and understanding’ (pers. comm. Sameer Zulfikar Ramzan, 07.08.2008). This combination found only in poetry is crucial for not only conveying a message but also for the emotional reverberations it seeks to cause in listeners. As expressed by Abdulwahhab Alawy (pers. comm. July 2008):

‘You cannot understand Muhammad through prose.’

There is no obvious difference between secular and religious poetry as their formal features both adhere to the same metrical rules. Similarly with content although in religious poetry there is a clear tendency towards religious topics and any seemingly secular subject matter is viewed from an Islamic perspective. There are three key themes that overlap and often become amalgamated in *qasida*: praising the Prophet, giving advice and *dua* ‘supplication.’

There are various ways of nesting, and patterns of repetition, from the word-level, to song-level, up to the performance as a whole.

In the subchapter on style and diction I look into the linguistic and rhetoric strategies employed in *qasida*. There is no single genre-specific style but certain elements are common. We see this in certain formulae, in language-use connected to Arabic, in the iconic value, the metonymical gaps and the rhetorical devices; all of which create emotional effect. Although the affective nature is prevailing – and

⁷³ *mashairi* (sing. *shairi*) has two meanings: 1) verse and 2) one specific metre of Swahili poetry that is often used for *qasida* as well as *taarab* songs (see below for specific explanations).

intended – it is sustained by rational and moral elements. In all these elements is reflected the balancing of expression of devotion and control of emotion (Boyd 1981).

So, there is certainly sufficient commonality (within the diversity of style) to identify individual instances as belonging to the *qasida* genre. However, the diversity of style is vital in the many different ways that *qasidas* are performed in Zanzibar today. These differences are in a ‘debate’ with each other and it is obvious that there is no one definitive form of *qasida*. The variations and borrowings across groups, bear witness to the fruitful nature and the dialogic relationship within the genre, rather than a mere parallel coexistence.

Despite the fact that the core material of my research is from Bakathir, and that the ‘Alawiyya is the historic origin of *Mawlid Barzanji* on the Swahili coast, the division into sub-genres captures the diversity and independence of styles more equally and aptly. To propose the notion of the ‘ideal type’ seems to be inherently wrong as it posits the existence of everything else as ‘deviant’ or ‘atypical.’ This is consistent with the local discourse where there is no norm.

My analysis of *qasida* seeks to merge :

- a close reading of the poems that examines language use, formal features, ambiguities and nuances of meaning,
- with a contextualisation of the texts in performance,
- but also within a system of poetic and/or literary genres,
- and an encompassing socio-historical framework.

This is to balance an intrinsic approach that does justice to the texts in their own right while not forgetting about extrinsic factors that help understand the genre’s emergence and effect.

This chapter is therefore linked to the previous chapter on performance which, with text, constitutes the two complementary sides of oral literature. Chapter 6 on intertextual phenomena in various shapes will expand on the analyses of texts situating the genre and individual texts within a network of other texts. This includes inspirations for *qasidas*, especially from Arabic texts, which is already hinted at here in the subchapter on language use.

The consideration of *qasida*'s internal intertextual relations as well as its place within a landscape of genres, will inform an elaboration of notions of authorship and of composition.

There are two kinds of *qasida*, which I refer to as 'traditional'⁷⁴ and 'experimental.' Within such a distinction I look at topicality, structure and style. These are not fixed borders and indeed many *qasidas* combine conventional and innovative features. These layers of features generate a kind of matrix between the poles of traditional and experimental (i.e. conventional and innovative).

The aim is thus to describe the poetics of the *qasida* genre, whose strict regimentations are constantly but subtly tested. The high degree of structuring in all aspects allows for high levels of intensity without descent into chaos.

⁷⁴ Although the term 'traditional' is problematic especially in the context of Oral Literature it is appropriate in this context as it denotes a long-established custom that has been passed on and specifically in literature an artistic or literary method or style established and subsequently followed by others.

4.1 TOPICS & CONTENTS

Qasida cover a wide range of content both religious and secular, yet most compositions praise the Prophet, recount his life or relate to their respective context of performance. In weddings for example, they include congratulations, blessings and advice directed at the couple.

There are two kinds of texts: narrative and descriptive. Very few *qasidas* are narrative in a strict sense. Although all texts include narrative elements only the adaptations of chapter 4 tell a string of events from the first to the last stanza. The thematic *qasida* that talk about death or AIDS do have narrative components. Another rare example is *Jibrilu Malaika* 'Angel Gabriel' which recounts a conversations between Gabriel and other angels in a dramatic dialogue episode. The majority of *qasidas* are descriptive texts that assemble praise and *dua* in no specific order and as a monologue, i.e. there is only one voice.

A vast majority of *qasidas* describe and praise the Prophet, celebrate the couple or child, and give advice. This thematic grouping I am calling the 'traditional triad' and all these are designated as 'traditional' *qasidas*. Only a small minority of *qasidas* go beyond this and introduce new themes, such as HIV/AIDS or death. Thematically these can be considered 'experimental.' Despite these innovative characteristics, the performers insist that they tackle them from an Islamic perspective. When the two are in variance, there seems to be a tendency to conform to orthodox Islam rather than local traditions; the praising of *ada ndogo* 'small feast,' is one example, which is diametrically opposed to the sumptuous Swahili weddings. Whether this tendency to simplicity is due to the host's limited economic resources is questionable. It may simply be due to rhyming with the previous line:

Vigelegele **kidogo**
Iwe kama ada **ndogo** (K5: 21-22)
A little bit of ululations
May it be like a little feast.

However, it could also be a critique of the lavish expenses that are seen as both socially divisive and opposed to the Prophetic tradition.

During Ramadan Bakathir reads special *qasidas* at Mskiti Gibreel. After *alasiri* ‘afternoon prayer’ there is a *tafşir darsa* ‘class in (Qur’anic) exegesis’ followed by these Ramadan *qasida*. The Arabic poem is divided into sections for every day of the month: *kila siku ina qasida yake* ‘every day has its own *qasida*’ (pers. comm. Muhammad Abdallah Rajab, 12.08.2008). This is for men only as it is held in the mosque. However, it is relayed live on the Zanzibar Cable TV network. Similarly, for other important events like the two Eids and Hajj send-offs, ‘occasional’ *qasida* are composed.

The topics discussed all interlock and are connected to each other. For example the seemingly odd example of a *qasida* about HIV/AIDS in fact ties in well with the idea of giving advice on how to behave properly where it serves as a graphic example of warning and relates to a prevalent social problem (see chapter 5.3.2).

4.1.1 Traditional Themes: Praise and Pleasure

The above mentioned three key themes – praising the Prophet, advice and celebration – need to be separated analytically here for the purpose of convenient reading. They are ‘interwoven modes’ (Graham Furniss, 05.10.2011) and in fact, many passages could be described as belonging to any two categories, the most frequent combination being praise and advice; praise is often used to formulate advice. In other words something that is praiseworthy is also an example and thus a pointer to good behaviour. The complementary nature of the two concepts are also expressed in a Qur’anic phrase, which refers to the Prophet Muhammad as *uswah hasanah* ‘an excellent model’ (33: 22), a statement that praises him as an exemplary ideal or role model for the believers.

However, praising the Prophet is as such also the chief aim of performing *qasida*. All informants, practitioners and audiences alike, agree that the single most important aim of *maulidi* and *qasida* is to praise the Prophet. When asked about the aims of performing *maulidi*, they all at first answered ‘praising the Prophet,’ before enlisting other aims. One speaker upon opening a *Maulidi ya Mtume* in February 2011 expressed the thought in a pithy and powerful statement:

Hatuko hapa kwa sababu maulidi ni mazuri au mabaya, tuko hapa kumsalia Mtume Muhammad şallā Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallim.

‘We are not here because *maulidi* is good or bad, we are here to praise the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.’

The term *maulidi* itself narrows this central theme down even further as indeed most poems talk about Muhammad’s birth. This concept is transposed to the other occasions at which *maulidi* are read. Even at a wedding, *qasidas* narrating his birth are indispensable. The praise of his physical and inner beauty is a second theme. His ideal of course is to be followed, which is a frequent form of indirectly giving advice. Muhammad is very often described as being incomparable. This rhetoric figure is called *hyperoche*, which is a special form of hyperbole (Wilpert 1989: 397), describing a person or object as beyond comparison.

Mtume hana mithali (B 5: 3)

The Sent has no comparison

Sifa za habibu hazina kifani (B 8: 4)

The characteristics of the Beloved have no equal

This figure of praise is also used in *taarab* to describe the beloved. Only one of many examples is a line from Ikhwan Safaa’s song *Waridi lisilo miba* ‘Rose without thorns’ in which the poet describes a woman as flawless:

Uzuri **uso kifani** kakuumba Mola wako

Beauty without equal, your Lord has created you.

The similarity in words and meaning of *qasida* and *taarab*, the description of physical and mental beauty, is no coincidence as both seek to express their admiration and love. The end of both is to be loved back. However, a secular love song to a woman differs from the religious.

The wish to equal or at least to portray his character is counteracted by its very nature:

Hatozawa Bwana Mfano Rasuli (B 11: 7)

No Man will be born, like the Prophet

Sifa zake twatamani Kwa watu kuzibaini
Ila hazina kifani Haziwezi kwandikika (B 9: 6)

His traits we wish for, for the people to understand

Alas, they have no equal, they cannot be written

Yet he is described and compared all the time, in similes and metaphors:

Kama ua la waridi	Tumwa wetu maridadi
Bure yao mahasidi	Memuhifadhi wadudi (Z1: 7-8)

Like a rose flower, Our elegant Prophet

The enviers without success, he is protected by the Most Loving

Uso wake mdawari	Unapendeza mzuri
Yashinda mwezi kamari	Nuru ya Tumwa Nabia
Pua juu umepanda	Nyusi vyema zimepinda
Kope nyingi zimetanda	kwenye macho ya Nabia (B 14: 9-12)

His face is round, beautiful and attractive

It surpasses the full moon, the light of the Sent Prophet

The nose reaches high, the eyebrows are nicely bent

Dense eyelashes extend over the eyes of the Prophet

Udhati wa umbo lake	Lilivyojengeka
Kadhalika sifa zake	Zimekamilika
Taratibu mwendo wake	Kauli akitamka
Kampamba Mola wake	Kwa ukarimu Nabia (T7: 5-8)

The nature of his body, as it is built,

Likewise his character traits, are perfect,

His manner is calm, when he speaks,

His Lord has adorned him, the Prophet, with generosity.

His purity is another key way of praising through description:

Alotwahirika	Kwa tohara ghaya (B8: 19)
--------------	---------------------------

The one who is purified with utmost purity.

The use of two Arabisms⁷⁵ here (note the 'tw' for 'ṭ' to Arabise pronunciation), in combination with *figura etymologica* or *maf'ūl muṭlaq* (see below), and hyperbole ('utmost') result in a kind of rhetorical over-exaggeration.

The invariable opening *qasida* in *Maulidi ya Homu* relates to Muhammad and his birth:

Ashiraka l-badru (H2: 1)

The moon has risen.

⁷⁵ Arabism is used to refer to an Arabic loanword or phrase (Miehe 1995: 312) that is identifiable as such (as opposed to a completely appropriated word such as *kitabu* 'book'). Some of the less frequently used create metonymical gaps. See also below 4.4.2.

The metonymical use of ‘moon’ which praises his beauty and perfection is repeated over and over by the chorus at the beginning of each and every *dahala*.

Similar to this prevalent metonymy is the one deployed in B8, where Muhammad is substituted by *lulu* ‘pearl’ (line 13), which also describes the Prophet as round, lustrous, and valuable.

Praise names in Arabic or loanwords from Arabic are also frequently used to characterise him. In fact, he is hardly ever called by his name⁷⁶, instead he is referred to as *Tumwa/Rasuli* lit, ‘Messenger, Sent’ or *Nabia* ‘Prophet.’ These can also be combined: *Tumwa Nabia*. Similarly, *Bashiri* means ‘bearer of good news’ referring to his role as God’s messenger to mankind.

Mtume wetu *Aziza* *Shafi’i* wa sote Umma (B28: 40)

Our Aziza, the Shafi’i of the Umma.

The above verse mentions two more honorific names for Muhammad, *Aziza* ‘beloved, darling’ and *Shafi’i* ‘healer.’

These epithets or one-word descriptions used as names are called *laqab* in Arabic, while his personal name, Muhammad, is *ism*. A further component of Arabic names is the *nasab* ‘patronymic series’ that enlists one or several male ancestors ascending in the paternal line.⁷⁷ The importance of these patronyms is evident in chapter 2 of the *Barzanji* which is wholly devoted to naming Muhammad’s ancestors.

An interesting double-entendre lies in the most frequently used praise name *Hashim*, *Hashima*, or *Hashimu* which occurs 57 times in the corpus. *Hāshim* is a common male Arabic given name, which signifies ‘broker’ or ‘destroyer of evil.’ Historically, the title *Hashim* was given to the great-grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad, ‘Amr al-‘Ulā b ‘Abd al-Manaf, who was the ancestor of the Banu *Hāshim* clan of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca. Thus, *Hashim* is at once a praising epithet as well as a historical reference to his family and their distinguished position within Meccan society at that time.

Muhammad’s centrality in Islam in general, and Sufism in particular (Schimmel 2008: 21), is manifest also in the Qur’an: he is the ‘seal of the Prophets’ (Sura 33, 40) and God and the Angels say blessings upon him (Sura 33, 56).

⁷⁶ An exception to this is T9 *Faida njema* ‘Good benefits.’

⁷⁷ This enlisting of lineage is also the naming system still used in Zanzibar today, usually with the father’s and grandfather’s names only.

A *qasida* verse sums up his all-encompassing significance within God's creation:

Yeye wa Mwanzo Ndie wa Mwisho (B15: 35)

He is the first, he is indeed the last.

He is the first as he is the true aim of creation, and he is the last as the last of the Prophets.

Much less frequent than praise of the Prophet is praise of God Himself. He is often praised through honorific names like *Karima* 'Generous,' *Jalili* 'Magnificent,' etc. that are among the 99 Beautiful Names. *Mwenyezi* 'Almighty' is a commonly used Bantu derived word, which is an elliptical version of *Mwenyezi Mungu* 'The Almighty God.' He is also called by the more general terms *Rabbi* or *Mola* 'Lord' which denote respect. *Mungu* 'God' and *Allah* are used, the last especially in chorus lines:

Ndugu yetu mtiifu	Yaa Allah
Leo tunamwika taji	Yaa Allah
Tunamuomba Raufu	Yaa Allah
Azidi kumfaraji	Yaa Allah
Amjalie Latifu	Yaa Allah mema yawe mahitaji (K4: 1-5)

Our obedient brother, Ya Allah

Today we make him wear a crown, Ya Allah

*We ask the **Forgiving**, Ya Allah*

To continue to make him happy, Ya Allah

*May the **Gentle** Ya Allah, fulfil his good needs.*

Overall the invocation of God is more central in *Maulidi ya Homu qasidas* whose repetitive style of smaller sections resembles *dhikr*:⁷⁸

Jalla Jallaluh Mola Wahidu (H5: 1)

The Majestic, God is One.

The praise name *Jallāl* is one of Allah's 99 Beautiful Names (*Asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*).

The above example of *Ndugu yetu mtiifu* is not only a beautiful example of patterning but also of offering *dua* and congratulations.

Tuokoe Yaaraby	Mola wetu Rahmany
Ili tuingie peponi	Kwa ridhaa yako (Z 3: 1-2)

⁷⁸ *Dhikr* is an Islamic devotional act involving the repetition of the 99 Beautiful Names, supplications or formulae taken from verses of the Qur'an and Hadith. *Dhikr* can be done individually, but in some Sufi orders (Qādiriyya) it is instituted as a ceremonial activity.

*Rescue us, oh Lord, our Lord, the Merciful
So that we enter paradise, with your acceptance*

Harusi iwe ya kheri ya furaha na amani (B 3: 4)
May this be a marriage of good fortune, of happiness and peace

Awe mwana wa baraka awe wa nyingi imani
May he/she be a blessed child, may he/she have deep faith.

Making *dua* is also mentioned in the *qasidas*:

Tuwaombee dua	bwana na bibi harusi
Ndoa yao iwe ya kheri	mbele yake Tumwa Nabia
Ziwaondoke balaa	Ziwaondoke fitina
Ziwaondoke hasada	bwana na bibi harusi
Uwape nyingi rehema	Uwape nyingi baraka (K 8: 2-6)

*We are making dua for the groom and bride,
May their marriage be happy, (like) before them the Prophet('s),
May disaster stay away from them, may disagreement stay away from them,
May jealousy stay away from the groom and bride,
Give them much compassion,
Give them many blessings.*

As can be seen in the refrain of *Oa* (for a full analysis see chapter 5.1.2) whether a phrase is a *dua* or advice is sometimes not easily discernible. *Upendane na mkeo* 'Love each other with your wife' could also be translated as a wish: 'May you always love one another, you and your wife.' This reveals the inherent ambiguity of the subjunctive, a form that oscillates between the desiderative and jussive moods (Schicho 1995: 149). While the jussive mood is used for issuing orders, commanding, or exhorting (and thus similar but more polite than the imperative), the desiderative mood expresses wishes, that are in the case of *qasida* presented as *dua* to God. They are supplications to God on behalf of the Prophet, the couple, the child, etc.

Furthermore these forms mostly appear in the third person and are therefore less direct and brusque, more appealing to the addressee(s) than ordering them.

The *dua* to be like Mohammed illustrates a further level of ambiguity:

Rabbi tukirimu	Kwa sifa zake
Utupe elimu	Na khuluka zake (B11, T1: 27-28)

*Lord, give us the gift of his traits,
Give us education and his character*

This is at once praise of the Prophet and indirect advice on how to behave. By portraying and praising certain aspects of his character and actions these are established as ideals. Consequently they are to be aspired to and thus proffer an indirect form of advice. The inherent ambiguity of the subjunctive form will be further discussed in the subchapter on style.

As with the well-wishing, the subjunctive occurs frequently with advice as well (*futurum esse*). Indeed, the two are closely related – and many phrases are in fact both: a *dua* can express advice on how one should be and behave; only it does so very politely.

Advice is offered mostly indirectly, either through descriptions of the Prophet, *dua*, or negative examples.

Duties of Muslims are described:

Khamisa, khamisa arikanuni isilami (H7: 1)
Five, five (are) the pillars of Islam.

The above refers to the five duties of Muslims, of which prayer is one:

Amri ya Bwana sala tano mnazisahau (T1: 3)
The Lord's order, the five prayers, you forget them.

The duties of Muslims are described in Sura 98 of the Qur'an entitled 'Clear Evidence,' which links them to this clear evidence provided in the creation and the scriptures on God's existence. Therefore, He alone was to be worshipped, in the manner He prescribed. Similarly in *qasida*, the two topics of behaving properly and pondering creation are inseparable. To observe creation, in all its completeness will inevitably result in the realisation of what is right and what is wrong, there are clear signs. Often the composers appeal to reason and ask the audience to look around them and ponder on what they see. This reasoning is then combined with moral pleading as good and bad is seen as self-evident. The argumentation is always supported and reinforced by pathos. Emotional elements are not only found in the language, particularly in the vivid imagery, but especially in the music as it can be seen as a continuation of language into the emotional and subliminal.

Appeals to emotion are particularly prominent in expressions of joy. This second core element of *qasida/maulidi* performances, is also closely related to the theme of praise: expressions of happiness at Muhammad's birth appear routinely in *qasida* and often in prominent places, such as the first line or the refrain.

The formulaic introduction *Nyoyo zimetukunjuka* 'Our hearts are merry' (B2: 2, B3: 2, B17: 2, B18: 4, B20: 2, B22: 7) that was coined by Sheikh Bakathir

Just as the Prophet is praised by calling him incomparable so is the emotional response to him:

Leo tumefurahika	Watu wote kwa yakini
Nyoyo zimetukunjuka	Furaha iso kifani (B 2, 3, 13, 16, 17, 22)

*Today we are happy, truly all the people,
Our hearts are merry by the happiness without equal.*

A variation of the above is the title of this thesis, *nyoyo zimefurahika* 'the hearts are happy':

Nyoyo zimefurahika	Kwa kuzaliwa Nabia
Ulimwengu unacheke	Kwa Nuru kutuenea (B13: 1-2)

*The hearts are happy, about the birth of the Prophet,
The world is laughing, as the light pervades us.*

Not only the heart is personified in the above example, the world too laughs.

It is made clear only by the small particle *-tu-* 'us' who is in fact happy.

Not only the occasion of the Prophet's birth, *mawlid*, is celebrated, but also his character is a reason for joy:

Shangiria sifa za Nabia (B19: 1)
Celebrate the Prophet's character.

Positive effects are mentioned for those who follow the above exhortation:

Furaha na Muangaza	Kwa wenye kumtukuza (B28: 39)
--------------------	-------------------------------

Joy and light, on those who hallow him.

The stated aim of a *maulidi* is therefore to praise and to celebrate Muhammad, and by extension celebrate a wedding or the birth of a child:

Leo tumejumuika	lengo ni kufurahika
Harusi yenye baraka	sote tunafurahika (K9: 1-2)

*Today we have assembled, the aim is to be merry,
A wedding with blessings, we all rejoice it.*

The paraphernalia of a joyous occasion, festive clothes, and how one celebrates are also described in *qasidas*:

Oa uvishwe kilemba Na joho la mahadhamu
Oa upate kuimba Nyimbo za kheri na tamu (B1: 21-22)

*Marry to be clothed in a turban, and a gold-embroidered joho,
Marry to get to sing, songs of happiness and sweetness.*

Here singing is not only mentioned as an expression of joy it is also detailed what kind of songs are sung, ones of happiness and sweetness. Furthermore it is a self-reference to *qasida*, its nature and purpose.

Singing is perhaps only surpassed by *vigelegele* 'ululations' in their exuberance. The mention of *vigelegele* also serves as a stage-direction to the female audience, who produce them promptly.

Vigelegele vidogo iwe kama ada ndogo (K10: 21-22)

Some ululations! May it be like a small celebration.

Another meta-commentary on celebrating at *maulidis* is the reference to dancing. The following example is the refrain of a very popular new *qasida* that calls on the bride to dance:

Cheza cheza leo 'mepata bwana (Q1: 21)

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

The encouragement is repeated time and again to a fast, up-beat rhythm. Not only simple repetition but various patterns of repetition of words and phrases that express joy are analysed below (4.4.2). This patterning is not limited to within the single *qasidas* but it extends to the whole performance. At wedding *maulidi* Bakathir always alternates one *qasida* on the Prophet with one on the wedding.

As we have seen, *maulidi* as a performance is a musical celebration enjoyed together with family and friends a fact that is also reflected in the texts: To be merry, happy, and joyful is mentioned time and again.

4.1.2 Enjoyment of Life and New Topics

In the above examples, the language is straightforward and simple, which suits the aim of 'just having fun' perfectly. However, there are more ambiguous statements, too. The following is an example of a *Homu* tessera:

Leo mambo eh na kesho mambo eh
 Aah, njooni mtazame (H8: 1-2)

*Problems today and problems tomorrow,
 Ah, come and have a look.*

What could at first sight be misunderstood as a rather pessimistic vision of never-ending problems is audibly an actual celebration of life. This *tessera* is often the last in a *dahala* and therefore at the most animated; to close the *dahala* it is accompanied by clapping at the end of a choreographic unit called *faya* 'fire.' Thus, this is an interesting example of how performative features may change the meaning of words radically: rather than despairing one might as well carry on cheerfully. Foley aptly summarises this characteristic of (oral) texts as being 'profoundly contingent on [their] context.' (2002: 60).

New topics are rare and diverse, therefore it is impossible to generalise. A few examples of innovative topics, namely death and HIV/AIDS, will be analysed in more detail in 5.3.

The injunction to pray in Amina 'Amen' (5.3.3) is a related but different topic.

The only generalisation that can be ventured about new topics is that they are subtle criticism. Or in other words, the usually young composers and performers frame their criticism from a religious viewpoint, in the traditional genre of *qasida*, and articulated a deferential, often ambiguous language.

4.2 FORM

There are two types of textual organisation concerning form: the classical metrical type and the *vugo*-type.

4.2.1 Classical Metrical

Most *qasidas* conform to the metrical rulings of classical Swahili poetry as described by Shariff (1988: 42-62). In the corpus collected three metres were identified: *wimbo*, *shairi* and *utumbuizo*. However, some instances are quite different from these, resembling genres that are more like oral performances than ‘Voiced Texts’ (Foley 2002: 43-45), e.g. *kidumbak*.

The most used metre for *qasida* is the classical Swahili⁷⁹ *shairi* metre: The *beti* ‘stanzas’ consist of four *mishororo* ‘lines’ each composed of hemistichs, called *vipande* (sing. *kipande*). Swahili poetry is based on *mizani* ‘the number of syllables’ and *kina* ‘rhyme’ (pl. *vina*). Each hemistich has a rhyme: the middle one is called *kina cha kati* and the end rhyme *kina cha mwisho*. The *kina cha kati* thus marks the caesura between the two *vipande*.

Metre may be considered a parallelism of rhythm (Wales 1989: 336).

The *wimbo* metre is similar to the *shairi* only it has three instead of four lines; in the following example with 10:10 syllables:

Waumini tunaomba duaa	Tuupate mwendo wa Mtume
Na ibada aliyoshushiwa	Tuifate kwa hima na shime
Tutapata tuloahidiwa	Mambo mema pasi na kinyume (T8: 4-6)

*The faithful, we make dua, so that we get the ways of the Prophet,
And the ibada he sent down, let us follow it with perseverance and shime⁸⁰
We will get what we were promised, good things without their opposites.*

The number of syllables need not be equal in the hemistichs and neither is there a prescribed number. The rule is to follow the pattern set out in the first line, which could be 6:6, or 6:8, or 8:6, etc.

⁷⁹ The terminology relates to the conventions of classical Swahili poetry (Shariff 1988: 42-45, Amri Abedi 1954 (reprint 1979)).

⁸⁰ *Shime!* is an expression that encourages to increase effort or used in an appeal for collective effort. *Hima* denotes both ‘perseverance’ and ‘hurry’.

The last line refers to the promise of Paradise which is frequently described in the Qur'an as a place of unimaginable bliss and no vexation.

4.2.2 *Vugo-type*

As mentioned above, alongside these classical metres one finds compositions that are more 'oral,' i.e. the genres whose lyrics do not or only partly adhere to the rulings of classical Swahili poetry but operate according to a different set of aesthetics. This definition does not refer to an absolute oral quality but locates these texts closer to the oral within a continuum between oral and written. Abdulaziz (1979: 55-56) links these two sets of poetry to their historical geneses:

The *shairi* quatrain appears to be the more recent of the 'classical' verse forms employed by the 18th and 19th century poets. There can be little doubt that it was inspired by the existing forms of Arabic origin. Songs of apparently indigenous Swahili origin like *mavugo* do not normally have patterns of rhyme and metre and might be comparable in form to oral songs of other Bantu peoples. [...]

Where these songs have rhymes, the patterns are the same as those that can be traced to Arabic origins.'

While agreeing with his observations on their form, his attribution of the classical metres to Arabic origin is contentious. There is clearly some form of inspiration from the Arabic poetic tradition, a fact that is reflected in the literary terminology, but the nature of this relationship is more complex than mere imitation. Bearing in mind that the early Swahili poets were conversant with Arabic, and intimately acquainted with Qur'anic verse and Arabic poetry it seems natural that there are common features. Due to the phonological and morphological differences of the two languages however, it is more likely that Arabic poetry has acted as a 'lexifier' to Swahili poetry as has indeed the language Arabic to the Swahili language. With Arabic poetics as super-stratum and Bantu as substratum, these combined with individual strategies over time to create the Swahili poetic tradition.

An example for a non-classical *vugo-type qasida* is *Jibrilu Malaika* 'Angel Gibreel' from Msolopa:

Jibrilu malaika	kawakusanya haraka
Njoooni nyote malaika	wote wakakusanyika
Kufika kawauliza	hamjaona muangaza
Wakajibu huo muangaza	ni nuru yake Mtume

Sasa hivi kazaliwa	mwenye uzuri wa pekee
Aee! Zahariri	zahariri nywele zake
Aee! Kama nyota	Kama nyota macho yake
Aee! Ya mnara	Ya mnara shingo yake
Aee! Ya upanga	ya upanga pua yake
Aee! Za upinde	za upinde nyusi zake
Twendeni makka twendeni	enyi wenzangu malaika
Twende tukaambe pole	mama Amina hongera
Hongera mama Amina	hongera bibi Amina
Hongera na vigelegele	Mwana amejiungua
Aee! Zahariri	zahariri nywele zake
Aee! Kama nyota	Kama nyota macho yake
Aee! Za upinde	za upinde nyusi zake
Aee! Ya mnara	Ya mnara shingo yake
Aee! Yana wanja	yana wanja macho yake (K2: 1-19)

*The angel Gibreel assembled them quickly
 'Come all you angels,' he gathered them all
 When they arrived he asked them 'Have you not seen the light?'
 They answered 'This light is the light of the Prophet.'
 'Just now he has been born, the one with singular beauty
 Aee! Of silk, of silk is his hair
 Aee! Like stars, like stars are his eyes
 Aee! Like a tower, like a tower is his neck
 Aee! Like a sword, like a sword is his nose
 Aee! Like a bow, like a bow are his eyelashes
 Let's go to Mecca, let's go, oh my fellow angels.
 Let's go to gently tell his mother Amina our congratulations
 Congratulations Mama Amina, congratulations Madam Amina
 Congratulations and ululations, the child has separated himself (i.e. has been born)
 Aee! Of silk, of silk is his hair
 Aee! Like stars, like stars are his eyes
 Aee! Like a bow, like a bow are his eyelashes
 Aee! Like a tower, like a tower is his neck
 Aee! They are blackened (lit. have) by antimony, they are blackened with antimony, his eyes.*

From this example it is clear that there is some rhyme though not everywhere and the number of syllables per hemistich is also variable. To understand how these *qasida* work a closer examination of its performance is required. Some form of rhyme is still there, even if not as regular as in the classical metres. Also the number

of syllables clearly still has to fit into the rhythmic scheme of the music. To achieve this, the performers may start earlier or later in the music, or shorten or lengthen syllables. Therefore 'music and silence are part of the line and the poetic line may be considered a unit of utterance rather than a numerically measured string' (Foley 2002: 33-34). Another important feature here is question and answer, which can be seen in the bipartite structure of many lines and the taking up of the last word of the first hemistich as the first word of the second hemistich, an obvious *anadiplosis*. This is but one form of repetition, there are many more. The various forms of repetition will be further explored in the analyses of the individual songs.

On the textual and organisational level, apart from prosody, the content is closely linked to the language through which it is expressed. Thus, the refrain plays a crucial role both for the constitution of meaning and group cohesion.

4.3 STRUCTURE

In the following I describe the textual structure of *qasida* on the macro level. The smaller scale structuring is covered respectively under the headings of formulaic speech, and style. Thus, this macrostructure is not an extensive account of structuring that occurs in *qasida*, but rather it selects a few aspects establishing an overall model that points out the major differences between the two types of *qasida*. I call these the **shairi-type** and the **mosaic-type** respectively. Furthermore I suggest a division into two subtypes of *shairi-qasidas*: the single poem and the bipartite *qasida*.

The most important features [or organisational properties] for all types of *qasidas* are:

The importance of voices (*sauti*) and their organisation according to pitch.

The relationships of instruments with vocals, and voices with each other, in the 'question-answer' (*kupokezana*) form.

Division into two or more sections: Many *shairi-type qasidas* are divided into two parts. On the level of the written text this is not evident. However, the parts can be identified very easily, when listening to a performed song in conjunction with musical features. While the *shairi-type* often appears with this bipartite structure, with the second being a fast, danceable piece, the mosaic type increases volume and animation gradually rather than in a single big step.

Even though suggesting a division into types, these are by no means fixed and absolute categories. Rather, there is a range of styles that corresponds to structural features that can be grouped in the proposed way. The possible combinations of performative and structural features are by no means limited to these and there are many grey areas between them. This notion is further blurred by the intra-genre inter-textual phenomena, i.e. appearances of textual and musical segments in various contexts.

The style range is as follows:

Shairi-type, single poem: recitative *a capella* (at mosque) for *akdi* or *Maulidi ya Mtaa* or with singing and drumming for weddings and *arbaini*

Shairi-type with two parts: one slower and one faster

Mosaic-type with many parts and constant *accelerando*, at weddings and *Maulidi ya Homu*

4.3.1 *Shairi*-Type

The *shairi*-type *qasida* appears in two subtypes: the single *qasida* and the bipartite *qasida*.

The single *qasida* is the one most resembling a conventional idea of a song. It has stanzas and a refrain that are sung to one tune from beginning to end, much like *taarab* songs. As the name suggests the *shairi*-type *qasidas* formally conform to the norms of classical Swahili poetry as described above.

In the *shairi qasidas* with two parts, the first part corresponds to a single *qasida*. (In other words, the single poem *qasida* has a second part affixed to become a bipartite *qasida*.)

Due to the strikingly similar way of patterning the following discussion is informed by the structural features of *muziki wa dansi* songs as described and discussed by Graebner (1994).

This parallel can be described by the term **bipartite structure**. Many (of Bakathir's) *qasidas* have two parts. The first part is the song that is also fixed as a written version in the *buku* from which the performer draws. The second part is, like the refrain, not written down but is often in some way derived from the written stanzas; it has very little 'text' and relies heavily on repetition and question-answer patterning. The rhythm is dancier and gets increasingly faster. In fact, this is the main function of this second part: making the audience dance, cheer and generally enjoy the performance.⁸¹ Other functions of this part are again similar to the refrain. Firstly, it strengthens group cohesion as everybody can sing along. Secondly, its persistent repetition of one expression from the song or a variation of it, singles

⁸¹ A similar situation can be found in *taarab* and *kidumbak*, where *kidumbak* appropriates sections of songs, often single stanzas or refrains, and recombines them with other textual elements set to a faster and more rhythmic music.

out this thought and thus stresses its meaning. This may favour one interpretation of the *qasida* in the first part over another (Graebner 1992: 7). Thirdly, it is also a pause from the conveying of big portions of text, thus constituting a relief from the constant interpretive efforts and allowing the audience to simply enjoy dancing. The wording is at this point so repetitive the meaning moves to the background and the voice is employed more to accentuate the rhythm.

As hinted at above, although the second part can be quite different and almost independent from the first, it is not randomly added to any *qasida*. There are, in effect, established partners that always appear together.

Bakathir's staples include many 'Alawiyya classics that have come to be indispensable in Zanzibari *maulidis*. These they combine with their very own rhythmic counterparts, which become the established partners.

The opening *qasida* *Ya Rabbi salli* is paired with *ala n-Nabii* merging into *katika al-janna* (🎵 Track 3).

Another 'Alawī *qasida* *Hamdun* is performed with *Ya Maulana*.

The already unique *Kaghani* with its long mystical text and singular style of refrain culminates in a fast rhythmical supplication: *Kuombea* and *Sallallahu ala Muhammad* (🎵 Track 19).

A simplified schematic outline of the bipartite *qasidas*:

Part 1 (or single <i>qasida</i>)	Intro	exposition	slow
	Stanzas	message	faster
Part 2	<i>Chemko</i>	dancing	very fast

Figure 4.01 Schematic outline of bipartite *qasidas*.

Each of the terms Intro, Stanzas and *Chemko* are described in more detail below:

Intro

The Intro does not always occur. When it does, this exposition is sung by the precentor or the high voices *uni sono* but without instrumentation and usually consists of the first written stanza or just the first line or even hemistich, much in the way of an anacrusis or upbeat.

Alternatively, a *qasida* may begin with a slow *nai* ‘flute’ intro that introduces the musical theme (analogous to exposing the textual theme by the voice).

In addition, this first textual section can be marked prosodically, e.g. by quality of voice (solo as opposed to uni sono chorus for the rest) or by modulation of the voice (slower, quieter, recitative).

Often this section also establishes addressees and sets a space and time:

Leo tumefurahika (B2: 1, B3: 1, B17: 5, B18: 3, B20: 1, B22: 1)

Today we are happy

Leo tumejumuika (K9: 1)

Today we have assembled

The same linguistic technique is used in the following introductory remarks albeit to a different effect:

Sote tunasikitika machozi yanatutoka (Z6: 1)

We are all sad, tears come out of our eyes

This innovative *qasida* by Zamzam shows how the linguistic similarity of the discursive elements sets their very different meaning apart and creates suspense. Instantly, the audience will wonder what causes sadness and tears. Moreover, they will not feel the usual inclusion in the ‘we.’⁸²

Another way of opening with meta-commentary is to refer to the production of the text.

Kaghani mwimbaji (B6: 1)

A singer has sung

However, be it through musical, performative, text-structural, or linguistic means, the formal and thematic difference to the other sections is established very clearly. When it occurs, this pre-introduction marks the set-up of what follows afterwards.

Stanzas

After the prelude as described above, this is the main textual section. The stanzas, that are usually sung by one or two lead singers, are set apart by the repetition of chorus parts. Here by chorus I do not mean what is habitually called refrain or the text that is sung unisono by all members of the group as opposed to solo parts but rather I will use this term to refer to the intensive and manifold interaction between

⁸² I will elaborate on the communal ‘we’ in section 4.4.

voices – fast alternations between uni sono and one or several solo voices or between chorus parts of different vocal quality. Each song has a standardised and rehearsed line of action for these alternations.

The recitation of the *Barzanji* chapters has an additional feature that works similarly. At the end of each chapter is the refrain ‘*aṭṭir allahumma qabrahu al-karīm [...]*’ that is chanted uni sono by the chorus (the high voices of the young boys). It ends in the word *wa-taslīma* which is ‘echoed’ by one or several of the older boys who join in slightly later with the *luzūm mā lā yalzam* rhyme: *wa-ta‘ḍīma* ‘and magnification’ – by this third voice (in addition to the solo recital and chorus refrain) the text is both expanded on semantically, emphasised musically and the chapter closed in a very elaborate way.

It has to be noted that this part of the text is the only one that is written down according to the conventions of Swahili poetry, i.e. not specifying how exactly the voices and repetitions are distributed or how the wording of the refrain is. This goes along with the relative importance of text over music in this part, although the drums join in for it, which is also the signal for the audience to dance. However, the drums merely support the delivery of the text, whereas the third section clearly inverts this relationship (see below).

We can conclude that the key features of this section are multiplicity of voices, symmetry and parallelism. The various forms of refrain and especially if a single refrain is used throughout a *qasida*, meet our expectations of chorus parts by their invariability and quality of voice. Note that the change of voice does not coincide with a change in grammatical person.

Chemko

Literally, *chemko* means ‘boiling’ – a term that is used in *muziki wa dansi* for the fast dancing section at the end. Even in *qasida* this last section relies heavily on the rhythmic lines of the *madufu*. Musically it brings an increase in intensity both in volume and in pace. Apart from repetition, the verbal text is reduced in all aspects – number of different words, grammatical complexity. The vocal expressions in this section are conveyors of semantic content, message, and means of melodic and rhythmic patterning. In this last part the drums take centre stage and the delivery of the message moves to be background. Rhythmic lines and dancing take precedence

here over singing. The singing becomes highly repetitive and is reduced to short phrases. These are easily picked up by the audience who sing along. These pithy excerpts from the refrains do emphasise a certain part of the *qasida* and thus may favour one interpretation over another (cf. chapter 5). They also occur in rhythmic patterns, e.g. groups of three repetitions of one phrase. Even the vocal parts contribute to the fast rhythmic drive at the culmination of a *qasida*.⁸³

The text usually consists of a phrase or a few lines that recall and intensify, in a succinct way, the tenor of the *qasida*.

An important function of this section is its inclusive character, not only the members of the group are all at once involved, but also the audience is physically part of the performance through dancing.

Meta-commentary or stage directions:

Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana (Q1: 18-19)
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

And *vigelegele*:

Vigelegele vidogo iwe kama ada ndogo (K5: 21-22)
Some ululations! May it be like a small celebration.

⁸³ Cf. The use of violins in *kidumbak* (pers. comm. Werner Graebner, August 2005) and horns in *muziki wa dansi* (pers. comm. Werner Graebner, October 2011).

Here is a simplified schematic model of interaction between precentor and chorus parts in all three parts:

Part	Precentor	Chorus
Intro	Stanza 1	
Stanzas		Joining in
		Refrain
	Stanza 2 unisono	
		Refrain
	Stanza 3 unisono	
		Refrain
	Stanza 4 unisono	
		Refrain
<i>Chemko</i>	Quick question and answer	

Figure 4.02 Simplified schematic model of interaction between precentor and chorus parts.

4.3.2 Mosaic-type

The mosaic is the organisational principle of all *Maulidi ya Homu dahalas* and of some groups' performance of the more common *Maulidi ya Dufu*.

In contrast to other (Swahili) song genres that present a single composition from beginning to end, the mosaic-type appears at first sight to be rather amorphous. The usual regularities concerning number of lines per stanza, the division of lines, number of syllables per line, and rhyme patterns are not visible in the text. These types of songs only reveal structural regularities on the macro-level when one looks at them within the corpus and what is more important in relation to musical and performative patterning.

The mosaic type *qasidas* could also be referred to by the more music-focused expression 'medley.' A medley is a piece composed from parts of existing pieces played one after another, sometimes overlapping. Another musical term,

‘potpourri,’ refers to an arrangement where the individual sections are simply juxtaposed with no strong connection or relationship. This type of form is organised by the principle of non-repetition. This is usually to be applied to a composition that consists of a string of favourite tunes. While both terms could be used, mosaic will be used here as this analysis focuses on textual rather than musical aspects. It seems more fitting for this specific context as it recalls Kristeva's ‘mosaic of quotations’ (1972: 348) with its reference to intertextuality. Keeping with the image of the mosaic I will refer to the individual sections of text as tesserae.

All *dahalas* in *Maulidi ya Homu* fall into this category. And often the Msolopa mixed group perform their usual *shairi* type *qasidas* in this way.

Each *Homu dahala* starts in the same way, with a *kisomo* of variable length by the *khalifa* alone and then the chorus join in for the very same *qasida* every time:

Ashiraka al-badru⁸⁴ (H2: 1)

The moon has risen

This opening pays homage to the Prophet who is the centre of attention and specifically refers to his birth, the second core meaning of *maulidi*. It is accompanied by gentle hand-gestures that follow the same choreography in each performance.⁸⁵ The rest of the *dahala* does not follow a set order but the *qasidas* are chosen by the *khalifa(s)* on the spot and repeated for as long as they wish. Some restrictions in the choice do apply, however, as some *qasidas* are associated with slower and calmer singing and dancing which occurs in the beginning of a *dahala* while others are seen to be suited to the more animated style of the end (pers. comm. Hajj Barua, August 2009). The *khalifa(s)* chooses from the group's corpus of tesserae one that he sees fit to the current level of animation in the music and the dancers' motions. Ultimately it is the *khalifa* who controls the speed through the beating of the *tasa* ‘brass plate;’ an ongoing, finely tuned, mutual evaluation of all these elements. Overall, there is a crescendo and accelerando in all of them. The tesserae are not locked in fixed positions within the *dahala*; while some of the slower, more subdued tesserae are habitually performed in the beginning, others occur mostly in the middle and yet others towards the end.

⁸⁴ The transcription reflects the Swahilised pronunciation of Arabic.

⁸⁵ Only later in the performance the *rusi* chooses between various choreographic units.

An example for a slow *qasida* is:

Marihaba	salli wa salimu ala Rabbana
Ala n-Nabii	Nabiyu mahabubana
Twaha rasu	Rasuli Shafiuna (H11: 1-3)

*Be welcome, peace and blessings upon our Lord,
on the Prophet, the beloved Prophet,
He has appeared, the Prophet our Saviour.*

Intermediate:

Khamsa	khamsa arikanu isilami (H7: 1&2)
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Five, there are five pillars of Islam.

Allah hua Maulana hua
Maulana ya Rabbi salama
Hua Maulana hua (H3: 1-3)

*Allah is our Lord
Our Lord, oh Lord peace
He is our Lord, he is.*

And animated end parts:

Jalla Jallaluh	Mola Wahidu (H5: 1&2)
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The Majestic, God is One

Leo Mambo eeh	na kesho mambo eeh
Aha	njooni mtazame (H8: 1-2)

*Issues today and issues tomorrow
Come all of you and see*

Each new *dahala's* initiation is fixed, both for the choice of *qasida* as well as movements, the remainder is less restricted. While the mosaic technique is the norm in *Maulidi ya Homu*, it is not at all in *maulidi ya dufu*. The mixed Msolopa group, however, employs a very similar patterning as the *Homu* style, where tesserae from different *qasidas* are recombined. This mosaic-*qasida* fills a single *qasida* slot within the *maulidi* grid. Furthermore, in a single *maulidi* performance the same tesserae are sung in several of these slots, just like the same *qasidas* could occur in all three *dahalas* in one night.

The mosaic technique found with Tarbiya is slightly different. Their precentor recombines stanzas from different *qasidas* in performance. The stanzas can be easily swapped around when the *bahari* 'metre' is the same and the number of syllables match, as they will then fit into the musical and rhythmical schemes.

4.4 STYLE AND DICTION

In the following I will point out some of the salient stylistic features of *qasida* and establish a stylistic typology that goes with the musical and structural types we have seen above.

It can be argued that the content of poetry is often very general and unimpressive and that it uses the exhausted words and vague terms, it is the poetic style that places them in new contexts and thus offers a fresh perspective on familiar themes. Nevertheless, a poetic text is much more than a mere collection of stylistic devices. The many other ways in which meaning is 'produced' are just as important.

Together with the prosodic and structural features described above, the stylistic characteristics of *qasida* craft the rhetoric qualities found in *qasida* texts.

In the perception of the performers and audiences alike, the lyrics are a highly valued part of these musical forms. The often recitative style of singing illustrates the importance of words in relation to music.

4.4.1 Language Choice

Qasidas in Zanzibar are usually either in Arabic or Swahili, rarely Bantu languages from the mainland,⁸⁶ or Hindi are used (pers. comm. Mwalimu Mohammed, 03.08.2008). Generally, the Arabic *qasidas* predate the 1964 Zanzibar revolution and today only Swahili ones are being composed. This is due to the fact that both the audience's as well as the composers' Arabic is not good enough. Yet the number of loanwords and expressions from Arabic is much higher in Swahili poetry and even more so in *qasida* than in everyday Swahili. Many old *qasidas* in Swahili are still performed and the Arabic ones remain much revered; according to local scholar Mohammed Idriss *zina ladha zaidi* 'they have more flavour.'

I will come back to Arabisms and code-switching below (under rhetorical figures).

⁸⁶ The Msolopa mixed group travelled to DRC Lubumbashi in the early 2000s and brought a *qasida* in Lingala home that they still sing.

4.4.2 Rhetorical Figures and Beyond

This subchapter points out the most salient rhetorical figures and tropes found in the corpus of *qasida*. It moves from the word level to that of phrases but leaves the larger scale workings of these devices to the next chapter that analyses whole poems. I also name and describe some of the most striking means of verbal arrangement beyond the common sense of stylistic devices that are more relevant to the oral context and the bilingual heritage, i.e. formulae, loans, code switching, and interjections.

Allah and Muhammad are both very rarely referred to by their names but a number of honorific substitutes for them:

Mwenyezi (B3: 51, B12: 2, B19: 4 & 14, Z5: 2 & 4)

Almighty

Manani (B2: 27, B12: 7, B16: 18, B18: 11 & 23, B24: 5, T10: 14, Z2: 4)

Glorious

These attributes are usually a descriptive adjective or a descriptive or metaphorical apposition. The epithets used for God are from the 99 Beautiful Names that are derived from the Qur'an. Another Qur'anic reference is Allah's portrayal as

Muumba wa mbingu na nchi (B23: 5 & 6)

The Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Which occurs in the Qur'an as *Rabb al-samawāti wa-al-arḍ* or *Rabb al-ʿālamīn*⁸⁷ (e.g. Sura 1: 1):

Mtume wa Mungu Bwana wa viumbe pia (B6: 16)

God's Prophet, the Master of all creatures

In fact, some of the praise names are not just qualifiers but more like short-hands for stories that one has to know in order to understand the layers of meaning behind a single word or expression.

One example is particularly interesting as it is a two-in-one praise. In the classic *qasida Tumwa Mkaramu* (🎵 Track 22) Muhammad is referred to as *Ab al-batuli*

⁸⁷ According to Abdel Haleem 'The Arabic root r-b-b has connotations of caring and nurturing in addition to lordship' and 'Al-ʿālamīn in Arabic means all the worlds, of mankind, angels, animals, plants, this world, the next, and so forth' (2010: 2).

‘Father of the Virgin.’ The virgin here is his daughter Fatima whose virtue is praised by the appellation and consequently she herself.

Similarly, the bride and groom are referred to in the songs by the title *Bwana Harusi* and *Bibi Harusi*. This at once stressed their position as focal point within the wedding *maulidi* and the recipients of *dua* and consequently *baraka*. But being a homophoric reference, i.e. a generic phrase that obtains a specific meaning through knowledge of its context, it also makes it easier for composers and performers to re-use *qasida*: in every wedding *bibi harusi* will refer to the present bride.

If their names are mentioned it is in conjunction with the title *dada* ‘sister’ for the bride and *kaka* ‘brother’ for the groom. These terms again remark on the communal nature of *maulidi*, making all participants relations of the couple.

This strategy of substituting a descriptive phrase for a proper name, or substituting a proper name for a quality associated with it is called *antonomasia*.

When female relatives are mentioned it is done in a similar manner, adding a title like *mama*, *anti*, *shangazi*, etc., to their name or indeed omitting the name completely. The deictic *origo* of these terms is the bride.⁸⁸

Repetition / *tiqrār* / *ithnāb*

Repetition is not only a performative feature, but as we have seen above it is also an attribute of the textual domains of structure and prosody. There are various forms of repetition manifest in the rhetorical figures. Repetition is a major rhetorical strategy for producing emphasis, clarity, amplification, or emotional effect. Repetition is thus a key theme that runs through all aspects of *qasida*.

Kesho kiyama (B14: 31, K6: 6)

Tomorrow (on) the Day of Judgement

This is a rare case of alliteration.

Repetition of sounds is largely limited to rhyme, which may also be seen as parallelism (see the above subchapter on form).

Anadiplosis is a special kind of repetition that reduplicates a word from the end of the previous line, or hemistich, in the beginning of the next.

⁸⁸ When relatives are mentioned in *qasidas* they are called upon by the precentor to come forward – and give some *tuzo*. This technique is also used in other genres of wedding music, namely *kidumbak*.

Aee! Zahariri	zahariri nywele zake
Aee! Kama nyota	Kama nyota macho yake
Aee! Za upinde	za upinde nyusi zake
Aee! Ya mnara	Ya mnara shingo yake
Aee! Yana wanja	yana wanja macho yake (K2: 15-19)

Aee! Of silk, of silk is his hair

Aee! Like stars, like stars are his eyes

Aee! Like a bow, like a bow are his eyelashes

Aee! Like a tower, like a tower is his neck

Aee! They are blackened (lit. have) by antimony, they are blackened with antimony, his eyes.

The repetition of certain words or meanings in the most exposed place within a poetic line, i.e. the beginning or end, lends them the maximum emphasis. They are called anaphora and epiphora respectively. Perhaps the best example for this is the *qasida* Oa 'Marry' by Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy in which every line begins with the injunction to marry (🎵 Tracks 20 and 21):

Oa uwache hadaa	Ya moyo kuhadaiwa
Oa atakaefaa	Mke anaesifiwa
Oa upate kuzaa	Kama ulivyozaaliwa
Oa utabarikiwa	Upendane na mkeo (B1: 1-4)

Marry to leave behind deception, of the heart to be deceived,

Marry someone who suits you, a woman who is praised,

Marry to bear/beget children, like you were born,

Marry and you will be blessed, love one another, you and your wife.

The same phrase as above closes every stanza with an epiphora that thus also expands across the whole poem and serves as refrain. This recurrence gives a kind of echo effect. More specifically it could be called an epanalepsis.

Kwani swifa zake hazina mithali	Alizopewa na Mola Jalia
Umbo la mwili lililo kamili	Alilopewa na Mola Jalali (T8: 4-5)

Because his praises have no equal, he was given them by the Lord, the Granter,

The shape of his body is perfect which he was given by the Lord, the Majestic.

In the following example anaphora and epiphora are skilfully combined. The anaphora is present in the grammatical person (1st person plural) 'tu-' and the TAM-marker '-na-' (present), i.e. 'we are' is repeated in every first hemistich. And every second hemistich begins with another anaphora 'the wedding of sister...' in the first

stanza and ‘the wedding of brother...’ in the second. The epiphora is manifest in the names of bride and groom in the first and second stanzas respectively.

Tunafurahia	Harusi ya Dada ...
Tunashangiria	Harusi ya Dada ...
Tunasherekea	Harusi ya Dada ...
Leo kaolewa	Sote tunashangiria
Tunafurahia	Harusi ya Kaka ...
Tunashangiria	Harusi ya Kaka ...
Tunasherehekea	Harusi ya Kaka ...
Leo Ameoa	Sote tunashangiria (B30: 23-30)

We are happy about the wedding of our Sister ...

We are rejoicing in the wedding of our Sister ...

We are celebrating the wedding of our Sister ...

Today she got married, we are all rejoicing.

We are happy about the wedding of our Brother ...

We are rejoicing in the wedding of our Brother ...

We are celebrating the wedding of our Brother ...

Today he married, we are all rejoicing.

Added to that is the parallelism in the meaning of the verbs *furahia* ‘be happy about,’ *shangiria* (Standard Swahili *shangilia*) and *sherehekea* ‘celebrate.’ As they appear together, and in the same grammatical construction, this tricolon is an eloquent way of repeating an idea without sounding monotonous.

In Swahili the reduplication of words is frequently used to add emphasis:

Amepambwa **kweli kweli** (B5: 3)

He [Muhammad] is truly, truly adorned.

Although this figure also occurs in every-day speech, this repetition of words with no others between, that is called palilogia in classical rhetoric, is worth mentioning here. Precisely because it is commonly used, it not only adds vehemence and fills a prosodic gap, but also shows increased closeness of the language of *qasida* to every-day speech in recent years, which consequently allows for easier comprehension.

The wish of composers for accessibility is not new. In fact, it seems to have been a major motivation for Swahili adaptations of *Mawlid* texts. Even in the 19th century Sayyid Mansab clearly states this in the introduction to his version of the *Barzanji*:

'Tanena kiyamu mutafahama [...]

I will speak Kiamu and you will understand' (Harries 1958: 30-31).

The repetition of words across lines, or indeed stanzas, is quite frequent and through their recurrence these words reveal the key themes and concerns of the specific *qasida* and the genre in particular. A general term for the repetition of a word for rhetorical emphasis is *ploce*; a more specific term is *traductio* which indicates the repetition of the same word variously throughout a sentence or thought.

Another manner of repetition is the use of several synonyms together to amplify or explain a given subject or term, *synonymia* in Greek, a kind of repetition that adds force. *Qasida* has the advantage of drawing from Arabic vocabulary and juxtaposes these loans with more common Swahili expressions so as to gloss them as well as enjoying the variation in the wording.

Maneno mazuri Fasihi kalamu (B11: 17, K1: 9, Z4: 13)

Beautiful words, clear speech

Note the chiasmic positioning of the nouns and their qualifiers, which corresponds to the word order in Swahili and Arabic respectively.

Where the above repeat or vary, the combined use of more words than is necessary semantically, as *pleonasm* adds yet another technique of repetition found in *qasida*. It is a kind of rhetorical repetition that is grammatically superfluous.

Tumwa and *Nabia* both of which mean Prophet are combined frequently.

In general the vocabulary of the more conventional *qasida* fits well with the traditional range of themes. There is a stock vocabulary for weddings and praise. Praise is mostly expressed through the praise names as discussed above and longer descriptions of his character and physical appearance. *Mzuri* 'beautiful' and 'good' is perhaps the most frequent and straightforward example for this.

Some words that occur time and again in the wedding *qasidas* include:

Harusi 'wedding', *sherehe* 'feast' *kuoa* and *kuolewa* 'marry, get married,' and *furaha* 'happiness.' One only finds an occasional antithesis paired with these to make clearer what the ideal that is portrayed means.

The contrast with the experimental, contemporary *qasidas* is clearest here. Not only do they point out societal issues but this criticism is also reflected in their

vocabulary: When people will *sikitika* 'be sorry,' for being arrogant *ringa* or despising others *dharau* in their *kaburi* 'grave' when it will be too late for remorse.

Parallelism / *izdiwāj*

Parallelism is generally understood to be simply a similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses. But Jakobson's notion of parallelism⁸⁹ extends much further than these small linguistic structures to entire blocks of lines that form whole stanzas that are parallel to other stanzas:

'Any form of parallelism is an apportionment of invariants and variables. The stricter the distribution of the former, the greater the discernibility and effectiveness of the variations. Pervasive parallelism inevitably activates all levels of language: the distinctive features, inherent and prosodic, the morphologic and syntactic categories and forms, the lexical units and their semantic classes in both their convergences and divergences acquire an autonomous poetic value. This focusing upon phonological, grammatical, and semantic structures in their multiform interplay does not remain confined to the limits of parallel lines but expands throughout their distribution within the entire context; therefore the grammar of parallelistic pieces becomes particularly significant. The symmetries of the paired lines in turn vivify the question of congruencies in the narrower margins of paired hemistichs and the broader frame of successive distichs.'

(Jakobson 1972: 173)

Thus, according to him the architecture of the poem itself is built upon parallelisms that are organised in a diversity and hierarchy of linguistic structures. These parallelisms must have a poetic significance: on the micro-level they have a subliminal, uncanny power, which is critical to the rhetoric of the debate. On the macro-level: '...architecture of the poem understood in terms of parallelism, forms the unity of the poem, and its unity in turn creates a signification or theme' (Caton 1990: 256).

As mentioned above, metre may be considered a parallelism of rhythm.

⁸⁹ 'Jakobson distinguished between semantic and syntactic parallelism, but his notion of parallelism extended beyond the two and also included syllabic and phonological parallelism. In his famous 1966 essay "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet," he sought to demonstrate how pervasive and universal the presence of these types of parallelisms is.' (Zevit 1990:385-386)

Below are the first lines of *Harusana* (🎵 Track 5) clearly displaying anaphora and parallel grammatical constructions. Added to that is the parallelism in the meaning of the verbs that all relate to celebrating and well-wishing:

Tunafurahia	Harusi jamili
<i>We are happy about the beautiful wedding,</i>	
Tunashangiria	Ndoa ya halali
<i>We are celebrating the lawful marriage,</i>	
Tunampongeza	Bwana Harusi
<i>We congratulate the groom,</i>	
Tunawatakia	Maisha mazuri
<i>We wish them a good life,</i>	
Tunawaombea	Kwa Mola Jalali
<i>We pray for them to the Glorious Lord,</i>	
Tunawapongeza	Wazazi wao
<i>We congratulate their parents,</i>	
Na tufurahie	Sote kwa pamoja
Na tushangirie	Kwa vigelegele (B4: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15-16)
<i>Let us all be happy together,</i>	
<i>Let us all celebrate with ululations</i>	

Negative expressions, i.e. what one should not do, are rare in *qasida*. If they do occur, they are always combined with positive counterparts, so as to bring out the good behaviour/character through antithesis. In Arabic rhetoric this is referred to by *tibāq*.

Akuwe pasi udhia	Na siha njema mwilini (B2: 6)
<i>May he/she grow up without difficulty, and with good health in the body,</i>	
Mambo yatawanyokea	Pasiwe na nukusani (B3: 10)
<i>Their affairs will be straight, may there be no blemish,</i>	
Na mambo yote kutimu	Pasiwe na nukusani (B3: 14)
<i>And everything may be accomplished without blemish</i>	

The following example illustrates the combination of parallelism and antithesis

Jamani leo **furaha** sote tunaona **raha**
Kwa kweli sio mzaha harusi kushangiria (T2: 9)

*Friends,⁹⁰ today (is) happiness, we are all feeling joy,
 Really it is not a joke, to be celebrating a wedding.*

Kufunga ndoa jamani ni jambo lenye thamani
Ukweli sio utani jamani nawambia (T2: 11)

*To get married, friends, is a significant thing,
 (This is) truth not jesting, friends, I tell you.*

By itself the ‘not a joke’ and ‘not jesting’ would just be litotes, deliberate understatements, when expressing a thought by denying their opposite, but here it is brought out even more by juxtaposing it with their antithesis.

Another example of this technique, which humorously remarks on the celebratory nature of weddings is the following:

Tumefurahi si haba
Ni harusi si msiba (Q1: 6-7)

*We are happy not a little,
 It is a wedding not a funeral.*

A variation on repetition is figura etymologica⁹¹ or *mafʿūl muṭlaq*, which is used in European, Swahili and pervasively in Arabic poetry alike for added emphasis:

Leo natufurahike Kama kucheka tucheke (T2: 6)

Today let us be merry, as to laughing let us laugh.

Alotwahirika Kwa tohara ghaya (B8: 19)

The one who is purified with purity.

The following wordplay on *hakimu* ‘Judge’ and *haki* ‘just’ only in Swahili as the two words sound very similar in Swahili. In Arabic, however, they derive from different roots (ḥ-k-m and ḥ-q-q respectively) and would not be considered similar.

Mola hakimū wa haki Asohukumiwa (Z3: 15)

The Lord is the just Judge who cannot be judged

⁹⁰ *Jamani* is derived from Arabic *jamīʿan* ‘all, together.’ Sacleux translates it as ‘compagnons’ (1939: 180).

⁹¹ Lat. a rhetorical figure in which words with the same etymological derivation are used adjacently (Wilpert 1989: 298, translation mine).

Similar to the Praise names a periphrasis is employed to further describe and qualify Mecca:

Alizawa Makka	Mji wa sharafu
Nchi ya baraka	ilo maarufu (B11: 13-14, K1: 13-14, T4: 7-8, Z4: 9-10)

*He was born in Mecca, the city of the noble
The blessed land, that is famous*

The metonymical usage of *roho* is widespread in Swahili and Arabic poetry, e.g. *Al-Inkishafi* (Bin Nasir 1977) and Ali Mkali's song *Albi* 'My heart.'

Other metonymy:

Na dhambi tulozichuma	ziwe ni za kufutika (B9: 10)
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And the sins that we have reaped, may they be wiped out.

Another widely used technique is inversion, i.e. Inverting the typical order of elements in a sentence. This is done for two reasons: Firstly, to suit the poetic line and rhyme patterns, and secondly to create suspense. The suspense is created by switching two elements; by putting an element that usually comes first after one that usually comes last. In the following example from Mtendeni, the prolepsis is spread out over a number of lines.

Silali naingojea	Ya Allah,
Silali naingojea	Hua ya Allah
Lailat ul-Qadiri	Maulana, silali naingojea. (H9: 1-3)

*I do not sleep, I wait for it, oh Allah,
I do not sleep, I wait for it, oh he is Allah,
In the Night of Power, our Lord, I do not sleep, I wait for it.*

The *Homu* tesserae is an evocation of what is described in the sura⁹² and the practices in Ramadan as related back to the Hadith. Combined with the prolepsis the tessera is an evocation of an evocation, or an interlacing of two evocative rhetorical strategies. See also below.

⁹² *Lailat al-Qadr* 'The Night of Glory' (Qur'an 97: 1-5): 'We sent it down on the Night of Glory. What will explain to you what the Night of Glory is? The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months; on that night the angels and the Spirit descend again and again with their Lord's permission on every task. Peace it is until the rising of the dawn.' 'This Meccan sura celebrates the night when the first revelation of the Qur'an was sent down' (Abdel Haleem 2010: 599).

A variation of this suspense effect is achieved by inserting words or phrases into the middle of a sentence, called hyperbaton in Greek:

Siku hiyo watapata Wale waliofuata
Bila kupata matata Hiyo Jannatu naima (B12: 15-16)

*On this day they will get, those who followed,
Without difficulty, the splendid Paradise.*

One way of inverting the organisation of phrases rather than words is chiasmus, which could be described as an inverted parallelism.

Tutekeleze lazimu Zilo katika sheria
Rukuni za wisilamu **Tuzifuata** kwa nia

***Let us** fulfil the obligations of the law,
The pillars of Islam, **let us** follow them with intention. (B23:16-17)*

Qasidas constantly mention people, places, and time. This plays out on two levels, the narrated about and the present; e.g. *qasidas* refer to the Prophet and the audience.

But the use of person deixis in *qasida* is even more complex and effective. The most obvious is the mention and description of third persons, mostly the Prophet, but also bride and groom or a child, according to context.

Not so clear are references on the meta-level, i.e. who speaks to whom. On the surface level, many wedding *qasidas* address either the bride or groom, or indeed both as a couple, congratulating them and giving them advice. As they themselves are not present during the recital, however, addressing them can be understood as a genre-specific style. The advice is therefore implicitly directed at the audience, and by extension society as a whole (whoever that is).

Identifying the originator⁹³ of the statements is even more intricate. While they are precomposed by one (or rarely a couple of) authors, they are always performed by a group, often with different voices (cf. structuring). Moreover, the audience is commonly singing along. Thus in practice, the *qasidas* are voiced by a multitude of possible individuals and groups. This is reflected in the texts themselves. *Qasidas* do not articulate thoughts in first person singular (although in most cases they have been composed by a single person), but always in plural which is in line with the

⁹³ For notions of authorship see chapter 6.3.2.

*I do not sleep, I wait for it, oh Allah,
I do not sleep, I wait for it, oh he is Allah,
The Night of Power, our Lord, I do not sleep, I wait for it.*

Although this singular use of the first person presents an elemental alteration in deixis it is still not in opposition to the rest of the corpus for two reasons. Firstly, the text simply states what the 'I' will do and thus paints the self as a model of behaviour but does not suggest openly to anyone to follow this example. And secondly, a group sings the refrain so in practice it remains a 'we.'

This technique of praising someone who lived centuries ago in a faraway place, the Prophet, and of seemingly addressing an absent person, i.e. bride, groom, or child, makes the advice all the more effective. This uncertainty and indirectness of addressing could be described as a kind of *fumbo*⁹⁴ 'riddle or metaphor, veiled speech' (from *-fumba* 'mystify, make a mystery about, disguise, use in an obscure way'). As the word indicates it is a way of expressing in a disguised, enigmatic manner, and consequently there is not one single meaning or interpretation to it (Shariff 1988: 82).

There are two main reasons for the extensive use of *mafumbo* in Kiswahili. First, they are used instead of open **language to give a person information or advice by talking as though about another person**. [...] Another reason is to express something that is not appropriate to be said openly. (Shariff 1988: 83; translation and emphasis mine)

This indirectness makes the advice more easily accepted by the audience be it at a *Maulidi ya Mtume*, a wedding, or from a recording. In addition to this, the uncertainty as to who is addressed creates an obscurity, which has an effect upon the exegetic process as explained by Barber:

Obscurity provokes the listener into acts of exegesis, which consolidate the utterance as an object of attention (2003: 331).

Through indirectness and obscurity this kind of *fumbo* is doubly effective.

Less frequently, places and times are mentioned. Similarly to the person deixis, they come in two forms: Talking about historic (or future) times and places or stating the time and place of the performance.

⁹⁴ This is not common usage for the term *fumbo*, only my pointing out the similarity with a technique of indirectness or obscurity.

The referred to place is the Arabian peninsula, namely Mecca and Medina at the time of the birth of the Prophet, which are the most relevant to the *maulidi* context.

Kazaliwa makka (B15: 9)

He was born in Mecca

These places can be quite specific, showing the importance of creating a backdrop for the story:

Hadi gorofani kichungia mwana khadija

Alipofika varada ya nyumba

Alimuona Bi Khadija (B4: 11-13)

Till upstairs [he came] to see Mrs Khadija

When he reached the veranda

He saw Bi Khadija

The same is true for mentions of time:

Yalipotimu yuani

Miezi tisia yakini

Hunena wazuoni

Kwa nyezi za kwandamia (B28: 9-10)

Know, when nine months were complete,

That is what the scholars say, of lunar months.

But also future and/or imagined places are featured in *qasida* for example:

janna and *peponi* 'paradise'

and *moto* 'fire'

jahanama 'hell'

kiyama 'The Day of Judgement' (often paired with *kesho* 'tomorrow on the Day of Judgement').

Place is also described in the story of *Isra'* and *Mi'rāj*, Muhammad's nocturnal journey to Jerusalem and then to heaven:

Safariye yenye daraja (H4: 10)

His journey of rank / upstairs

The place where the *maulidi* takes place is only ever implied and not mentioned directly, through the expression *leo tumejumuika* 'today we have assembled.' As I have argued in the chapter on performance, for the time of the performance the *maulidi* group together with the audience create an out of the ordinary space irrespective of the location (see 3.4.2).

Some *qasidas*, usually in the opening stanza, contain meta-commentary on the composition or origins of the text.

Hunena wanazuoni (B28: 10)

The scholars say so.

Kaghani mwimbaji (B6: 1)

A singer has sung

This last example is a particularly telling meta-commentary that remarks on the singing, however, it does so with the Arabic loan *-ghani* 'sing, recite' not the more usual term *-imba* 'sing'. As no Swahili would refer to *maulidi* or *qasida* as being sung by *-imba*. They say *-soma* 'read, recite.' Whereas *-ghani* in the example is used to express the modulation of the voice while avoiding *-imba* that is associated with *ngoma* and *taarab*. According to Zanzibari singers Makame Faki and the legendary Bi Kidude (Fatma Baraka) in the secular genres *-ghani* refers to a melismatic improvisation in the Arabic style (pers. comm. Werner Graebner, August 2011).

There is even more meta-commentary, for example on the intention of *maulidi* in the *qasidas*: mostly on praising the prophet, the celebratory nature of *maulidi* and to a much lesser degree on the giving of advice. The remarks on celebration usually state the fact of coming together and the aims in doing so:

Leo tumejumuika lengo ni kufurahika (K9: 1)

Today we have come together, the aim is to celebrate.

The Swahili language has many verbs in various derivative forms to express being happy and celebrating, including: *kufurahika*, *kufurahia*, *kushangiria* (Standard Swahili *shangilia*), *kusherehekea*, *kuona raha*, etc. The different terms for celebrating are often combined in the stanzas at once varying the wording and expressing the same idea:

Tunafurahia	Harusi ya Dada ...
Tunashangiria	Harusi ya Dada ...
Tunasherehekea	Harusi ya Dada ...
Leo kaolewa	Sote tunashangiria

We are happy about the wedding of our Sister ...

We are rejoicing in the wedding of our Sister ...

*We are celebrating the wedding of our Sister ...
Today she got married, we are all rejoicing.*

Tunafurahia	Harusi ya Kaka ...
Tunashangiria	Harusi ya Kaka ...
Tunasherehekea	Harusi ya Kaka ...
Leo Ameoa	Sote tunashangiria (B30: 23-30)

*We are happy about the wedding of our Brother ...
We are rejoicing in the wedding of our Brother ...
We are celebrating the wedding of our Brother ...
Today he married, we are all rejoicing.*

As always this too is in 1st person plural (bold) to stress the communal nature of the celebration.

The mention of advice is far less frequent:

Bwana harusi twakupa wasia
Twaomba ushike tunayokwambia (K9: 3-4)
*Dear groom, we give you advice,
We ask you to remember what we tell you.*

The phrase has several functions: It fills a gap where required by prosody, relates to the oral context and establishes a link between performer and audience. By the explicit mention of giving advice he positions himself, calls for attention and stresses what is advised.

Waumini tunaomba duaa	Tuupate mwendo wa Mtume
Na ibada aliyoshushiwa	Tuifate kwa hima na shime
Tutapata tuloahidiwa	Mambo mema pasi na kinyume (T8: 4-6)

*The faithful, we make dua, so that we get the ways of the Prophet,
And the ibada he sent down, let us follow it with perseverance and shime
We will get what we were promised, good thing without their opposites.*

Shime! is an expression that encourages to increase effort or used in an appeal for collective effort. *Hima* denotes both 'perseverance' and 'hurry.'

Shime waumini	Tumswalie Rasuli (T10: 1)
---------------	---------------------------

Shime, believers, let us praise the Prophet!

Apart from an expansion of themes, the most salient feature of the newer, experimental *qasidas* is the inclusion of direct injunctions such as:

Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana (Q1: 18)

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

This insertion of imperative forms is an indicator of a change in tone, from a more indirect, modest style that focused on portraying positive examples to a more direct and critical style that also addresses problems. There are no absolutes or extremes on this spectrum; it is a subtle shift in the manner of speaking. This transformation to a more direct and critical language can be seen in the following example, where the composer reprimands people for not praying and threatens with a demise of the world. Also this opinion is voiced in the composition as a child speaking to parents, or by extension youths to elders, a typical bottom-up power-relation (see 5.3.2).

Baba na mama jinsi gani mnajidharau
Amri ya Bwana sala tano mnazisahau
Huu ulimwengu isilamu unaghururika
Siku ya kiyama hasara itatufika (T1: 2-5)

*Father and mother, how much you are in disdain of yourselves?
The command of the Lord, the five prayers you are forgetting them,*

*This Islamic world is drowning,
On the Day of Judgement, detriment/waste will happen to us.*

Another widespread version of subjunctive is the *dua*-style. It mostly occurs in the end of a composition and features injunctions of Allah and supplications. The making of *dua* itself is often mentioned as meta-commentary:

Umtunze Rahamani Dua tunawaombea (B2: 24)
Take care of him/her, Merciful One, we make a supplication for them.

Dua tunawaombea Kwa Mola wetu Manani (B3: 9)
We make dua for them, from our Lord, the Beneficent.

Tunakuomba Mwenyezi Dua yetu ipokea (B3: 51)
We ask you Almighty, to accept our prayer.

Although, the supplications are mainly at the end of *qasidas* they may occur in any place and there are even *qasidas* that are wholly in *dua*-style. Bakathir's *Rabbi Twakulingana* (B23) is a suitable example of this. Not only is the content matter and

diction of the poem a *dua*, every stanza closes with the epiphoric mention of the supplicatory nature: *dua tutakabalia* ‘we will offer a prayer.’

According to Miehe (1995: 294) the most salient features of Swahili Poetry alongside prosody are the use of archaisms and Arabisms.

Archaisms and Arabisms have iconic value as they allude to their own prestigious past, to Arab descent, and to the ‘sacred’ language of the Qur’an and Arab culture in general. Furthermore the poet shows off his knowledge of language and literature in Arabic and Swahili. In the context of *qasida*, the occurrence of more Arabic loanwords than Standard Swahili and the occasional code-switching to that language is only natural due to the centrality of the Arabic language in Islam. In some cases it is hard to decide whether a word or phrase is perceived as Arabic or whether it has become so commonplace in Swahili usage that it is no longer perceived as foreign. This includes some of the praise names for Muhammad, like *bashiri* and *hashima*, that are easily identified by Zanzibaris as referring to him but very few can explain what they actually mean (‘Bearer of Good News’ and ‘the Honourable’⁹⁵ respectively).

In the following example the number of Arabic terms and phrases is very high and involves grammatical constructions as well. It therefore constitutes code-switching, and reveals the fluid boundaries between the two languages in *qasida*.

Na sala zinajazana	Kwa Mtume wetu I-Amini
Mpaka siye jamiina	Utupe Khusnul-yakini
Yaillahi ya Rabbana	Twakuomba Subhana
Kwa baraka za Nabiina	Waimamil- Mur-salina ⁹⁶
Yaillahi ya Rabbana	Twakuomba Subuhana
Kwa baraka za Nabiina	Waimamil- Mur-salina
Wallahi usonekana	Utukubalie duana
Tena sote ikhiwana	Ututie katika I-janah (B7: 17-24)

*And the prayers are crammed in for our Prophet the Trustworthy,
Until all of us together, give us the beauty of truth,
Oh Allah, Oh Lord, We ask you, the Glorious,
For the blessings of the Prophet, and the Imam of the Messengers.*

⁹⁵ There is more to the meaning of *Hashima*, see above 4.1.1.

⁹⁶ By ‘the first of the Messengers’ Muhammad’s rank among God’s Prophets is described as that of *primus inter pares*.

*Oh Allah, Oh Lord, We ask you, the Glorious
For the blessings of the Prophet, and the Imam of the Messengers.
By God grant us our supplications,
And all of us brothers, put us into paradise.*

Another kind of example is the combination of Swahili stanzas and Arabic refrain in *Bi nadhra* by the Msolopa group. Whereas the original Arabic version praises Allah and his compassion and calls upon the believer to ponder the world and be patient, the Swahili stanzas express joy on the occasion of a wedding.

Other less frequent loans are Lamuisms, they are very rarely used and limited to one phonological variation between Standard Swahili (or Kizanzibari) and Kiamu, where the voiced palatal plosive is substituted by the palatal approximant:

pamoya ‘together’ (B25: 9, B27:9, T6: 18).

The plural *nyoyo* ‘hearts’ (Standard *mioyo*) could be a Lamuism. However, Sacleux notes both forms alongside each other with no reference to dialectal use, which suggests that it may be an archaism.

Hunena wanazuoni (B28: 10)

Both *-nena* ‘say’ and *wanazuoni* ‘scholars’ are clearly of Northern dialect origin. *Nena* can be identified as being a Lamuism lexically (as opposed to the Southern Dialect *-sema*) and *wanazuoni* phonologically (Southern Dialect *wanavyuoni*).

The style found in Sheikh Bakathir’s compositions has been influential, as many of his *qasidas* are still performed by Bakathir and some of them being among the ‘key *qasidas*,’ e.g. *qasida ya ufunguzi*, also borrowed by most if not all other groups on the island. The intertextual phenomena with regard to his compositions will be further described in chapter 6.

Perhaps the most salient feature of his poems is his recurring use of specific words. In this way he creates a set of formulae that recur throughout the songs. These include the above-mentioned opening and closing formulae:

Nyoyo zimetukunjuka (B2: 2, B3: 2, B17: 2, B18: 4, B20: 2, B22: 7)

Our hearts are merry

The pervasive use of formulae and formulaic speech is according to Mieke one of the main characteristics of Swahili poetic style (1995: 302). Together with the use of aphorisms or aphoristic speech this builds an impersonal and apodictic style, which is well suited for the giving of advice.

Abdulaziz remarks that '*mashairi* literature is essentially gnomic, and the work of the poet is to express the common feeling and humour in the best way he can' (1979: 66).

Most Islamic literature in Swahili (and the Qur'an as well!) promises the pleasures of paradise, and does not threaten with the tortures of hell that would lend so readily to graphic imagery.

Although *qasida* seems an unlikely place for it, one can find some sexual innuendo. In Islam, sex is perceived as a natural component of human behaviour but should be confined to the marital situation. In Swahili poetry there is a vast range of sexual allusions, usually concealed in *mafumbo*⁹⁷ but sometimes rather blunt, of which the most famous example must be the *Utendi wa Mwana Manga* that is virtually pornographic. In *qasida* sexual innuendo is more demure and only found in short *mafumbo*:

Oa nyumba ilo nyumba Mchanganye na damu (B1: 23)

Marry, so that the house will be a house, mix the blood.

The refrain of a *qasida* I overheard on 05.02.2011 said:

Chanua waridi

For which there are two possible translations according to who is addressed. The surface meaning is 'Flower/blossom, rose!' directed at the bride who is praised through the metonymical use of *waridi*. Another possible translation if the refrain were directed at the groom is 'Tear the rose.' Here the rose metonymically refers to the bride's virginity.⁹⁸

Seemingly trite use of *waridi* as a figure is freshly employed in this *qasida* and through its clever combination with a verb all the more effective in creating the double entendre.

For weddings and *arbaini* when the performance is mainly directed at specific persons, the bride/groom/couple or child, their names can be integrated into the text. There are two ways to do these 'personalised texts': adaptable texts and new

⁹⁷ A fine example for a *fumbo* is the song *Kasha* 'The chest' by the Mombasan group Johar which talks about a woman, who has been deflowered, by saying that his decorated chest was opened (Shariff 1988:82).

⁹⁸ I am grateful to Abubakar Mikidad for his clarification.

compositions. While the latter is done only in exceptional cases, the adaptable texts where the names can easily be inserted into the poem are quite common.



Plate 4.01 Ibrahim reading the couple's names from the invitation card to insert them into a song.

The following example is taken from *Harusi* by Sheikh Bakathir:

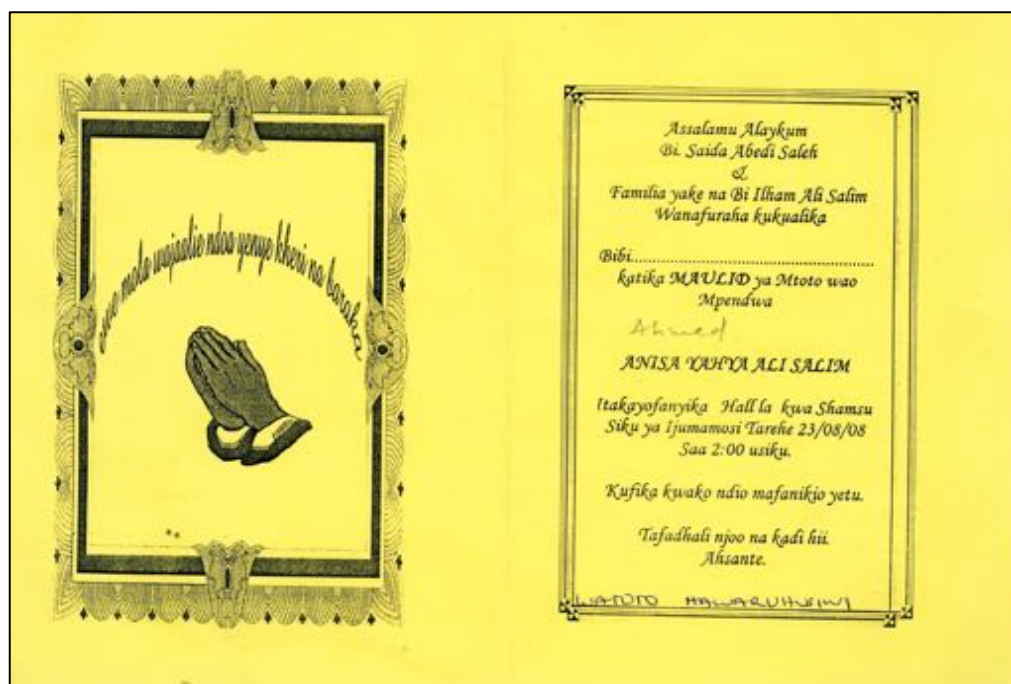
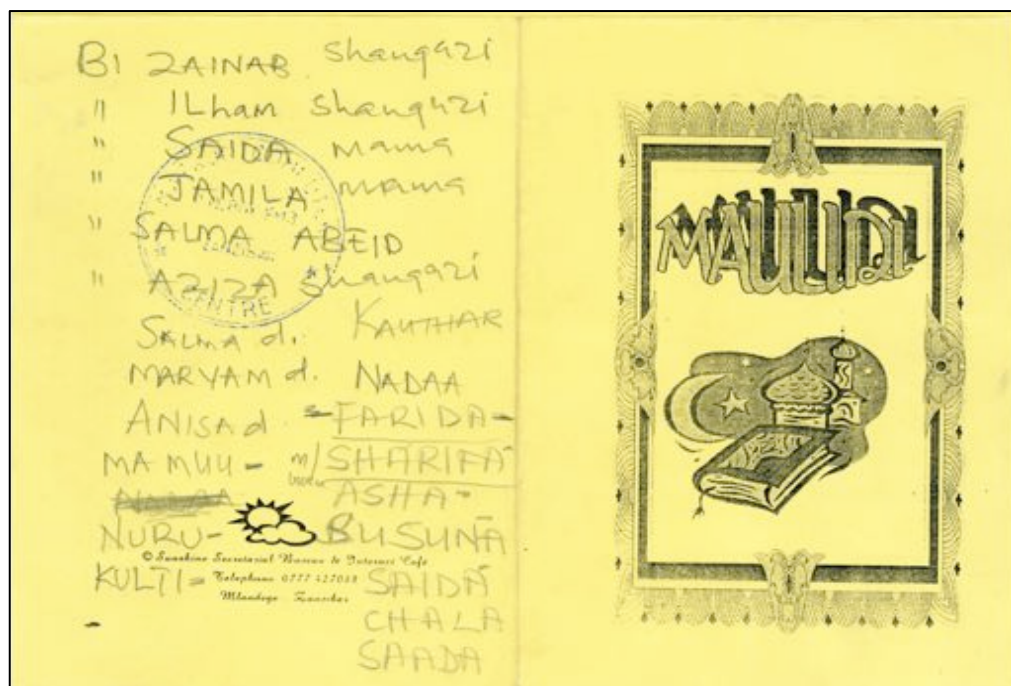
Wenyewe wamependana	Bila ya tabu na udhia
Mpendwa dada ...	Na ... kamzuia
Tumefurahika sana	Hongera tunawambia
[...]	
Tunakuomba Jalali	Irefushe hii ndoa
Dua iwe makubuli	Uwalinde na mabaya
Dada ... kikweli	Na ... kutulia (B3: 37-39 & 57-59)

*We ask you, oh ... make this marriage last long,
May the prayer be accepted, protect them from bad people,
Sister ... truly, and ... to be calm (take to a settled life).*

[...]

*They fell in love by themselves, without problems or annoyance,
The beloved sister ..., and ... has kept her,
We are very happy, we tell them our congratulations.*

This may be expanded to include a long list of female family members (*mama* 'female ancestor or parent; mother's sister' and *shangazi* 'father's sister') of both the bride and groom, as it is they who organise the wedding. The following illustration is an invitation card, which has a handwritten list of all the names to be included in the song:



Plates 4.02 and 4.03 Invitation card with notes.

The text on the inside reads:

'Assalamu Alaykum. Mrs Saida Abedi Saleh and her family and Mrs Ilham Ali Salim have the pleasure to invite you, Ms. ... to the *Maulidi* of their beloved child Anisa Yahya Ali Salim, that will take place at the Shamsu Hall on Friday 23.08.2008 at 8pm. Your coming is indeed our success. Please bring this card with you. Thank you.'

The handwritten comment is 'Children not allowed.'

4.4.3 Written and Aural Versions

Even though *qasida* are precomposed, written down and preserved in *mabuku* ‘books’ there is a certain element of fluidity. Firstly, the music is never written down and therefore one or more groups might sing a single *qasida* to several tunes and this may change with time. Secondly, the *kiitikio* ‘refrain’ is also only in rare cases written down. It is often derived from the last line of the first stanza or the last line of the current stanza. However, it can also be completely different from any line in the poem. Examples of these different strategies can be seen below. In the *Tarbiya buku* there is a remark on this after *Kasda No 6: Kiitikio cha kila ubeti* ‘A refrain of each stanza’ which describes the derivation of the refrain from the last line of the stanza after this has been sung.

A variation on this strategy is combining the last hemistich with signal words uttered by the precentor, which are then replied to by the chorus. In *qasida*, the signal words are usually praise names for Muhammad. An example for this elaborate constitution of a refrain is Kaghani (🎵 Track 19). This is what the first two stanzas look like in the *buku*:

Kaghani mwimbaji	Wa msafara sikiza
Kwa jina la taji	La Mtume mpendeza
Ngamia mwendaji	Maumbile yakicheza
Kwa ulevi wake	Kutajiwa mfaraji
Mtume	
Rasuli	
Habibi	
Litazame quba	Lenye rangi ya kibichi
Mtume swahiba	Yumo humu hajifichi
Nuru ya haiba	Anga lake la hila nchi
Liloondosha giza	likatufaraji (B6: 1-11)

*A travelling singer has sung, listen,
In the name of the crown, of the beloved Prophet,
Riding on a camel, with his limbs dancing,
With his intoxication, to be named the consoler.*

*The Sent
Messenger
Beloved*

*Look at the grave/ mausoleum, of fresh green colour,
The friendly Prophet, is inside it he does not hide,
The light of the charisma, his light of this country
That dismissed darkness, that has brought us relief.*

Precentor	Chorus	
Kaghani mwimbaji		
Wa msafara sikiza		
Kwa jina	Kwa jina la taji	La Mtume mpendeza
	Ngamia mwendaji	Maumbile yakicheza
	Kwa ulevi wake	Kutajiwa mfaraji
Mtume	Kwa ulevi wake	Kutajiwa mfaraji
Rasuli	Kwa ulevi wake	Kutajiwa mfaraji
Habibi	Kwa ulevi wake	Kutajiwa mfaraji
Litazame quba	Litazame quba	Lenye rangi ya kibichi
Mtume	Mtume swahiba	Yumo humu hajifichi
	Nuru ya haiba	Anga lake la hila nchi
	Liloondosha giza	likatufaraji
Mtume	Liloondosha giza	likatufaraji
Rasuli	Liloondosha giza	likatufaraji
Habibi	Liloondosha giza	likatufaraji

Figure 4.03 Aural version of *Kaghani*

In addition to the refrain setting off the stanzas and giving structure there is the closing of every single stanza with a variant of the verb *-faraji* ‘relieve, console,’ which is also repeated four times as part of the refrain.

The ways of creating the *kiitikio* are the same that are used in *taarab* and other song genres. As there seems to be an agreement among the performers as to how a refrain is derived they do not think it is necessary to write it down. Not fixing it onto paper also makes it much easier to change than the rest of the song. Thus, the refrain may change with time and circumstances. For example, when a version is found that suits the music better or for the sake of novelty. Another, more important, reason is to bring to the foreground another interpretation or meaning of the stanzas. An account of how refrains are created in *taarab*, how this affects

meaning, how refrains change for example through the involvement of the audience, and how this may shift the focus of interpretation can be found in Graebner (1992).

One lead singer of Tarbiya says he frequently takes one stanza from a certain *tungo* 'composition' and then one stanza from another in order to *kupata maana mapya* 'get new meanings' in order to suit a different context.

This is easily done when the metre is the same. It is further facilitated by the stylistic properties of stanzas and individual lines.

'Not only is the Swahili stanza an independent unit, but each of the lines within the stanza is often a complete statement that can stand on its own as a sentence. Enjambement is not very common' (Abdulaziz 1979: 62). Abdulaziz goes on to describe how the independence of each stanza is further sealed by the use of the refrain (1979: 63). This not only makes it technically easy but also 'the meaning and progress of theme are not interfered with by removing any of the verses or shifting them round. In fact each verse can stand on its own and succeed in conveying the desired idea although together they emphasise and repeat the general theme' (Abdulaziz 1979: 64).

Just as easy as rearranging the sequence is the recombination of stanzas from originally different compositions.

Qasida is both oral and written. That is to say, the genre is neither strictly oral nor strictly written. The Great Divide model has long been shown not to hold true; the reality of literary forms is more complex. Foley (2002: 39) proposes four categories that are not closed but 'nodes on a spectrum' that he groups according to the degree of orality and writtenness respectively in three dimensions, composition, performance, and reception (Foley 2002: 36-38). *Qasida* would fall into his 'Voiced Texts' category as they are precomposed poems that are performed orally and reception is only aural.

It would be easy to ascribe some of *qasida's* structural and linguistic features to its formulaic and hence oral nature. However, these theories were developed from the performance of (historical) narrative genres such as tales and epics and should thus not be applied to *qasida*.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have shown how language choices are influenced by the iconic value of Arabic both as a religious language and in local literary traditions on the one hand and the desire to be understood on the other hand. This choice is also shaped by inspirations of the texts and the identity of the composer or performer.

Secondly, I have indicated how the three key themes are interlocked: Praise (of the Prophet), advice, and congratulations and *dua*. These themes coexist with sense of joyfulness, expressed in both the text and the music.

Thirdly, I have drawn attention to how, through *qasida*, various ways of addressing directly and indirectly are possible. Also, how its framework can be used in bottom-up and in top-down communication.

Fourthly, I hinted at how the oral and written features are tackled differently in *qasida*, some being more written some being more oral which results in a range of styles rather than a single one.

Fifthly, I have shown how in both the classical metres and 'traditional styles' the repetition of elements in various forms is a core technique, ranging from the repetition of words to ideas to rhymes to entire songs to the *maulidi* as a whole. This repetition procures the merging of words with music, the stressing of meaning and a patterning that is necessary for the human ear. Together with repetition, the mutual mnemonic powers of music and text support the affectivity of the message even years later. As Yunus Sameja says: 'You can have something cheaply when you are young but you will understand when you grow up' (August 2008). This is also due to the use of *mafumbo/majāz* 'metaphor' or indeed of *balagha kubwa* 'big rhetorical style' (Mohammed Abdallah) that need to be reflected upon, *zingatia* 'ponder.' Some *qasida* include 'hooks' for stories, short expressions that evoke whole stories and help us remember them.

The **framing** and **nesting** that is marked by a number of different formulae not only structure the *maulidi* internally but also set it off from normal speech. In other words, the 'packaging' with recurrent customary phrases (most of which are in Arabic and therefore are more form than content) gives performances a mnemonic pattern (for both performers and audiences).

The important issue of 'keying performance,' of marking the discourse as a

communication to be received by audiences and performers in a particular way. For this purpose, Bauman's list (cited after Foley 1992) of such differentiating characteristics is helpful: special codes, figurative language, parallelism, special paralinguistic features, special formulae, appeal to tradition, and disclaimer of performance. All of these appear in *maulidi* and even in separate *qasida*.

The repetition and fixity of this framing make it a ritual that is clearly marked as such. However, the balance between immutable elements and originality accounts for the appeal and popularity of *maulidi* and *qasida*. The stability of this framework makes a *maulidi* somewhat predictable but reassuringly predictable as it satisfies the nostalgia for authenticity, and the need for stability. And it is precisely this stability that enables some of the artists to express subtle criticism.

Within the thematic and stylistic diversity there is unity. All *qasidas* draw on the suggestion of reason, morality and emotion, with a clear emphasis on emotion.

It is the ambiguity and density of poetic expression that make it so evocative and that creates pathos, which is supported by music, for truly 'you cannot understand Mohammed in prose' (Abdulwahhab Alawy).

What can be deduced from the above is that it is vital to look at a broad variety of texts on the level of a corpus not just at single *qasidas*.

The arrangement and emplotment of *qasidas* reveal a genre-specific aesthetic that has developed internally as well as through external stylistic influences. *Qasida* display a complex relation between artistic text and context. Praising the Prophet, commenting, advising, pointing out and describing ideals are just a few of the most evident ways how *qasida* and their context interrelate. Furthermore, the various contexts in which the same *qasidas* are performed, and in addition the transposition into new media contexts, as opposed to purpose-gearred *maulidi*, further complicates this (see chapter 7).

Qasida are neither long narrative pieces nor are they improvised but rather *qasidas* are practised and more or less fixed texts. Given that they are performed on an almost daily basis by the group the mnemonic function of formulas is also unlikely. Furthermore it is not necessary to mark off *qasida* against 'normal' speech by introductory and closing formulae as this is already achieved by the musical accompaniment, the recorded format or the context of performance (stage setting).

The triad of reason, morality and emotion, with poetry (ambiguity) make *qasida* so effective in content. This is reinforced by the emotive powers of music, and also the music and repetition on many scales account for the long term, subliminal influence of the values transported in them. How these three come together in *qasidas* are further illustrated in the sample interpretations in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Songs



The observations made in chapter 4 only scratch the surface. Only when content, form and style are seen working together – and in performance – can we come to a better understanding of what the *qasidas* and *maulidi* as a whole mean.

The choice of *qasidas* in this chapter was made to showcase both the diversity and conventionality of *qasida*. Thus, I have made three groupings:

The **Classics**, which are older Arabic and Swahili *qasidas* that are performed by the vast majority of *qasida* groups in Zanzibar;

Conventional *Qasidas*, being the conventional contemporary compositions;

Innovative *Qasidas*, being the innovative contemporary compositions, that combine conventional features with a number of thematically, stylistically or structurally innovative elements;

It is important to remember that this classification is not a local one, but mine from the examination of the material collected.

5.1 Classics

5.1.1 *Tumwa Mkaramu – Ya Rabbi Salli*

‘The Generous Prophet – Oh Lord, bless’

(🎵 Track 22)

Composed by Sheikh Bakathir it is also performed by Tarbiya and with slightly different text by Msolopa (B11 & T1 & K1). Even though Zamzam do not have it in their *buku* it is very likely they too perform it but did not deem it necessary to write it down as it is so well known. It is perhaps the classic praise poem for Muhammad. It is usually performed right at the beginning of the *maulidi*, as it is auspicious to open the celebration with a prayer to him.

Refrain:

- 1 Yā Rabbi ṣallī ‘alā Muḥammad
- 2 Yā Rabbi ṣallī ‘alāyh wa sallim
- 3 (Al-salāmun ‘alāyh
- 4 Al-ṣalātun ‘alāyh)

Oh Lord, pray upon Muhammad

Oh Lord, send a prayer upon him and peace

Peace (be) upon him

Prayer (be) upon him

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| 5 | Tumwa Mkaramu | Ameshadhihiri |
| 6 | Nuru ya dhalamu | Khairul-bashari |
| 7 | Hatozawa Bwana | Mfano rasuli |
| 8 | Twampenda sana | Abal- Batuli |

The Generous Prophet has been revealed

The light in the darkness, the best of mankind

No master/man will be born, like the Prophet

We love him so much, the father of the Virgin

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|
| 9 | Zilifurahika | Jamii kauni |
| 10 | Alipozaliwa | Bani Adinani |
| 11 | Insi na majini | Wote walisema |
| 12 | Sote furahani | Kuzawa Hashima |

They were overjoyed, the whole tribe

When he was born, the Bani Adinan

*Humans and jinns, all said
We are all in joy over the Honourable One's birth*

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|----------------|
| 13 | Alizawa Makka | Mji wa sharafu |
| 14 | Nchi ya baraka | ilo maarufu |
| 15 | Nyota zilizimwa | Nuru ikawaka |
| 16 | Kafa ya wanyama | waliotamka |

*He was born in Mecca, the city of the noble
The blessed land, that it famous
The stars were extinguished, Light shone
The entirety of animals who spoke...*

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|
| 17 | Maneno mazuri | Fasihi kalamu |
| 18 | Walikibashiri | Na kutabasamu |
| 19 | Tumwa kazaliwa | Twaiban daina |
| 20 | Wanja ametiwa | Machoni yakina |

*... Beautiful words, clear speech
They brought the news, and smiled
The Prophet is born, forever good,
He has put antimony on his eyes, verily.*

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------------|
| 21 | Tena kasafika | Makh- tuasuri |
| 22 | Amenadhifika | Kushinda johari |
| 23 | Tumwa ni mzuri | Umbo na twabia |
| 24 | Jashole ambari | Rihi misikia |

*Also he is pure, the Chosen,
He is clean, better than a jewel,
The Prophet is beautiful, his body and character,
His sweat is ambergris, a perfumed aroma.*

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-----------------|
| 25 | Yeye ndiye kamba | Isiyokatika |
| 26 | Yeye ndiye Mwamba | Usiyovunjika |
| 27 | Rabbi tukirimu | Kwa sifa zake |
| 28 | Utupe elimu | Na khuluka zake |

*He is indeed a rope, that does not break
He is indeed a coral rock, that does not break
Lord, give us the gift of his traits,
Give us education and his character*

- | | |
|----|--|
| 29 | [Salla Allah, Salla Allah, Salla Allah |
| 30 | Jalla Jallaluh] |

The *shairi*, or maybe *utenzi*, metre is very regular with 6:6 *mizani* ‘syllables’ and a simple rhyme scheme:

a b
a b
c d
c d

The *qasida* has a strong Arabic influence; not only in the words but in the expressions too. This is partly because the religious vocabulary of Swahili derives from Arabic, and partly because of the emblematic value of the language. Needless to say, it may also be because the composer was fluent in it. Its high prestige, not only in the religious but also in the larger cultural realm, makes it the perfect tool for both praising the Prophet and asserting one’s own status and identity as a ‘high-culture,’ Stone Town theologian and eloquent poet. The code-switching with Arabic occurs in pronunciation, words and expressions. Most of this *qasida* may not be clear to the majority of listeners.

Most prominent is the combination of a Swahili poem with a refrain in Arabic – albeit the formulae employed should be clear to every Muslim. Some more Arabisms not accessible to every Swahili speaker are: *Khairul-bashari* (l. 2) and *Abal-Batuli* (l. 4) that are also praise names for Muhammad (see below). The second stanza features the Arabic phrase *jamii kauni* ‘the whole universe’ (l. 9) and *insi* ‘humans’ which in combination with *majini* ‘jinns’ (l. 11) might be identifiable. Similar to line 9 is the use of *kafa* ‘entirety’ though it occurs here not in an Arabic genitive construction but with its Swahili equivalent, an -a of relation. *Twaiban daima* ‘forever good’ (l. 19) which appears as *daina* due to rhyme and *twabia* ‘character’ (l. 23) are marked to be pronounced in the Arabic way: labialisation replaces pharyngealisation. One last example is *rihi misikia* ‘a perfumed aroma’ that does the opposite, i.e. a vowel is inserted to make the Arabic expression more pronounceable for Swahili speakers and to fit it into the metre.

Rihi misikia also elaborates on the preceding *ambari* ‘ambergris’ so that it can be understood from the context.

Several times synonyms or equivalent expressions are used to gloss the Arabic terms. *Sifa* (l. 27) and *khuluka* (l. 28) both mean ‘character traits’ appear in

consecutive lines; and *maneno mazuri* 'beautiful words' directly precedes its Arabic counterpart *fasihi kalamu* 'clear speech.' This figure of speech is called *ithnab* 'wordiness' in Arabic stylistics and is used to clarify and amplify a thought. While clarification is definitely needed with the Arabic examples, it can also be found in Swahili-only *qasidas*. In lines 21 and 22 –*safika* and –*nadhifika* 'be clean, pure' appear in a parallel manner, just as in lines 25 and 26 –*katika* and –*vunjika* 'break'. Similar to Arabic, the northern Swahili dialects, especially the one from Lamu (Kiamu), enjoy a high prestige as literary language. Until today it is common in poetry to use forms from Kiamu to elevate the style. The suffix –*le* in *jashole* 'his sweat' (l. 24) is an example of this (Standard Swahili would be *jasho lake*) but seems to be more pragmatically used here to save a syllable.

The *qasida* praises Muhammad by several different forms of description such as similes, metaphors and praise names.

Examples for outright description of his beauty are:

Wanja ametiwa	machoni yakina (l. 20)
Jashole ambari	rihi misikia (l. 24)

Both are motifs in Islamic tradition that also appear in the *Barzanji* (5, 10). More references from the *Barzanji*'s chapters 5 and 6 are:

Ameshadhihiri (l. 5)	<i>Barzanji</i> 5,1 and 6,1
Jamii kauni (l. 9)	<i>Barzanji</i> 5,3
Makka [...] maarufu (l. 13-14)	<i>Barzanji</i> 6,19
Nyota [...] nuru ikawaka (l. 15-16)	<i>Barzanji</i> 6,5-7 and 6,14
Maneno mazuri, fasihi kalamu (l. 17)	<i>Barzanji</i> 6,21
Kasafika [...] amenadhifika (l. 21-22)	<i>Barzanji</i> 5,9
Tumwa ni mzuri, umbo na twabia (l. 23)	<i>Barzanji</i> 5,4

Inspirations from the *Barzanji* are quite customary, due to the fact that most composers of *qasida* have heard and read out the text countless times.

Indirect praise for Muhammad is offered through his birthplace which is mentioned in lines 9-10. Another indirect form of praise is achieved through describing the reactions of humans, djinns and nature to his birth

There is extensive use of similes and metaphors:

The comparisons to a stone and a coral rock in lines 25-36: Through two similes in parallel construction the idea is explained and amplified, which adds emotional force and intellectual clarity in this fumbo.

The metaphor of light is picked up twice and in both instances light is contrasted with darkness which increases the force of the image.

Nuru ya dhalamu (l. 2)

Nyota zilizimwa nuru ikawaka (l. 11)

Muhammad is presented as the light in the darkness which suggests that he is the bringer of knowledge and salvation into an age of ignorance (*jahiliya*). Moreover, nature reacts to his birth and reflects this situation: by switching off the stars his light shines even brighter.

Related to the light imagery are the remarks on his purity, that (much like the comments on his beauty) speak about both the body and the soul:

Tena kasafika

Amenadhifika

Kushinda johari

Also he is pure,

He is clean, better than a jewel.

Thirdly, the praise names for him are short cuts describing the Prophet and his qualities:

Khairul-bashari 'the best human' (l. 2)

Hashima 'the Honourable One'

(l. 8)

Tumwa mkaramu 'the generous Prophet' (l. 1)

Generally the terms, *Tumwa* or *Rasuli* 'Prophet' and *Bwana* 'master, gentleman' are used to designate Muhammad rather than calling him by his name, which is only done in the formulaic refrain.

Being concise descriptions, these praise names act as hooks to stories. In *Ab al-batuli* (l. 8) by *batuli* 'lit. virgin' means his daughter Fatma. So Muhammad is also praised through his (excellent) daughter who did, conversely, not remain a virgin but produced the only line of descendants of the Prophet. That she is called a virgin here is somewhat peculiar.

The reactions of the natural world upon his birth are most lively in the second stanza when men and animals all express their joy in direct speech. The image which is continued in lines 15-18, is reminiscent of the way all creatures praise Allah:

Are you not aware that it is Allah Whose limitless glory all creatures that are in the heavens and earth extol, even the birds as they spread out their wings? Each of them knows how to pray to Him and to glorify Him; and Allah has full knowledge of all that they do.

(Sura Al-Nur 24:41)

Not only is the image overwhelmingly large, the dramatic effect is a direct reference to the context, namely a performance in which all present praise the Prophet.

The refrain, which is not notated, is repeated after every second line (similarly to the chapter 4 translations) and an expanded refrain (with the part in brackets) is sung after stanzas 1, 3 and 6. Repeated twice the refrain also opens the song which confirms its exposed status. Being an oft-repeated *dua* supplication in Arabic it is the quintessential meaning and purpose of *maulidi* and *qasida*: kumsalia Mtume ‘to pray for the Prophet.’

Stanza	
	Refr.
1	2 lines
	Refr.
	2 lines
Extended Refr.	
2	2 lines
	Refr.
	2 lines
Refr.	
3	2 lines
	Refr.
	2 lines
Extended Refr.	
etc.	

Figure 5.01 *Tumwa Mkaramu*: aural version outline.

The *qasida* closes with an ecstatic climax: to a faster and faster rhythm and with many repetitions of line 29, in sets of three, praising Allah.

5.1.2 *Oa* 'Marry!'

Listen to and watch 🎧 Tracks 20 and 21.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'O young people! Whoever among you can support a wife should marry, for that is more modest for the gaze and safer for your private parts.' (Sahih Muslim, Sahih Bukhari)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'When a man marries, he has fulfilled half of his religion, so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half.' (Bayhaqi)

The famous *qasida* composed by Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy is one of Bakathir's classics, often performed a capella at the mosque for the *akdi* 'wedding contract ceremony.' As the title indicates, it invites people, and more specifically men, to marriage by explaining its benefits. The injunction *Oa!* 'Marry!' is repeated at the beginning of every single line of the song making it powerfully insisting. The next most important statement is *Upendane na mkeo* 'Love one another, you and your wife' which closes each stanza and thus runs as a rhyme throughout the poem, a common feature in the Classical Swahili *shairi* metre. The rhyme scheme is as follows:

a	b
a	b
a	b
b	c

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Oa uwache hadaa | Ya moyo kuhadaiwa |
| 2 | Oa atakaefaa | Mke anaesifiwa |
| 3 | Oa upate kuzaa | Kama ulivyojaliwa |
| 4 | Oa utabarikiwa | Upendane na mkeo |

*Marry to leave behind deception, of the heart to be deceived,
Marry someone who suits you, a woman who is praised,
Marry to bear/beget children, like you were born,
Marry and you will be blessed, love one another, you and your wife.*

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Oa aliye wa kheri | Mshikamane na dini |
| 6 | Oa yai la johari | Litie nuru nyumbani |
| 7 | Oa mdomo mzuri | Upendezao lisani |
| 8 | Oa uwe barakani | Upendane na mkeo |

*Marry someone of good fortune, the two of you hold onto religion,
Marry an oval gem, that brings light to the home,
Marry a good mouth, that has a pleasing tongue,
Marry to be in blessing, love one another, you and your wife.*

- | | | |
|----|------------------|--------------------|
| 9 | Oa mke wa Omani | Asoleta ya kufuja |
| 10 | Oa usioe duni | Anaeitwa kiroja |
| 11 | Oa alo na imani | Utakidhi yako haja |
| 12 | Oa kheri itakuja | Upendane na mkeo |

*Marry a woman from Oman, who will not bring disturbance/uproar,
Marry, do not marry an inferior (woman), who is called an oddity,
Marry someone with faith, you will be granted your needs,
Marry and happiness will come, love one another, you and your wife.*

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------|
| 13 | Oa mke wa Sitara | Asiyependa mabaya |
| 14 | Oa mwanamke bora | Ataefuata njia |
| 15 | Oa usioe sura | Oa mzuri tabia |
| 16 | Oa mke kama joya | Upendane na mkeo |

*Marry a woman of modesty, who does not like bad people,
Marry a superior woman, who will follow the path
Marry, not a (pretty) face, marry a sound character,
Marry a woman like a joya, love one another, you and your wife.*

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 17 | Oa usiwe muhuni | Roho ipate kutuwa |
| 18 | Oa mke mwenye dini | Mungu akikujalia |
| 19 | Oa utie nyumbani | Kheri ulotunukiwa |
| 20 | Oa ujue kuoa | Upendane na mkeo |

*Marry not to be a vagabond, so the soul gets rest,
Marry a woman who has religion, God will fulfil you,
Marry to put at home, the happiness that has been given to you as a present,
Marry and know to marry, love one another, you and your wife.*

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 21 | Oa uvishwe kilemba | Na joho la mahadhamu |
| 22 | Oa upate kuimba | Nyimbo za kheri na tamu |
| 23 | Oa nyumba ilo nyumba | Mchanganye na damu |
| 24 | Oa usijidhulumu | Upendane na mkeo |

*Marry to be clothed in a turban, and a gold-embroidered joho,
Marry to get to sing, songs of happiness and sweetness,
Marry a house that is a house, so that you get to mix blood,
Marry and do not oppress yourself, love one another, you and your wife.*

The command to marry is grammatically (logically) followed by either a subjunctive or future verb form or a nominal phrase, explaining whom to marry, how to behave and the positive outcomes of marriage. To be married is the social norm.

In the first stanza two *figurae etymologicae* occur that are constructed in parallel with the first hemistich expressing the idea and the second, both in passive voice, defining it further.

Oa uache hadaa ya moyo kuhadaiwa (l. 1)

Marry to leave behind deception, of the heart to be deceived

Oa upate kuzaa kama ulivyojaliwa (l. 3)

Marry to bear/beget children, like you were born

The first line is further elaborated on and balanced by:

Oa usiwe muhuni roho ipate kutuwa (l. 17)

Marry not to be a vagabond, so the soul gets rest

After being married, a man ceases to be a vagabond as he sets up a household and has a family to care for – and a wife to care for him. His body and consequently also his soul become free from homelessness and ‘get to settle down’.

The song’s advice includes mention of the negative effects of remaining single that are, of course, to be avoided:

Uwache hadaa ya moyo kuhadaiwa (l. 1)

Marry to leave behind deception, of the heart to be deceived

Usiwe muhuni (l. 17)

Do not be a vagabond

Usijidhulumu (l. 24)

Do not oppress yourself

And relating to the choice of wife, what is to be avoided is:

Asoleta ya kufuja (l. 9)

She should not bring disturbance

Asiependa mabaya (l. 13)

Who does not like bad people

Usioe sura (l. 15)

Do not marry a (pretty) face

Usioe duni anaeitwa kiroja (l. 10)

Do not marry an inferior (woman), who is called an oddity

This last example from the third stanza is balanced by

Oa mwanamke bora (l. 14)

Marry a superior woman

Which occurs at the same position, the first hemistich of the second line. So what characterizes a superior woman?

From an Islamic perspective a woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her social status, her beauty, and her piety:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'A man marries a woman for four reasons: for her property, for her rank, for her beauty, and for her religion (and character). So marry the one who is best in the religion and character and prosper.' (Bukhari Volume 7, Book 62, Number 27)

Beauty is mentioned twofold, firstly in:

Yai la johari litie nuru nyumbani (l. 6)

An oval gem, that brings light to the home

The comparison with a gem and something that brings light to the home could both also be interpreted as character traits rather than relating only to physical appearance. The other reference to beauty is Omani. *Mke wa Omani* 'Omani woman' suggests several meanings: as Arabs they are fair, a cultural ideal, and are perceived as more civilised/cultured. Especially in Zanzibar being Omani also (still) means belonging to the ruling elite and / or former landowners, probably a rich and powerful family, which makes this a very Zanzibari reference. And finally, Omanis are Ibadhis, who are said to be more strict than Sunnis.

A good character is to be given preference over a beautiful face:

Oa usioe sura

oa mke wa tabia

Do not marry a (pretty) face, marry a woman of good character

An important feature of this good character is *sitara* (l. 13). *Sitara* literally means ‘covering’ in the sense that she covers up/dresses properly especially outside the home. It can also be translated as ‘concealment’, in the context of marriage remarking on the privacy between husband and wife. Lastly, *sitara* stands for the behaviour or character behind the covering: ‘modesty’ or ‘reserve’ (Johnson 1939: 437). Key to achieving *sitara* is speech:

Oa mdomo mzuri upendezao lisani
Marry a good mouth, that has a pleasing tongue

In these lines *mdomo* ‘lips, mouth’ and *lisani* ‘tongue’ metonymically express her words, meaning that she should speak gently, in volume and content. Interesting is the use of *pendeza*, lit. ‘to make to love,’ in this context, normally used to refer to outward appearance.

A number of verses relate to her piety/religiosity:

Mshikamane na dini (l. 5)
The two of you hold on to religion
 (Mke) alo na imani (l. 11)
(A woman) who has faith
 Mke mwenye dini (l. 18)
A woman of religion
 Mwanamke bora atayefuata njia (l. 14)
A superior woman who will follow the path

Here *njia* ‘way, path’ is an ellipsis for *al-sirāt al-mustaqīm* ‘the straight path’. The allusion to the Qur’anic expression is easily understood by all Swahilis.

Mke anayesifiwa (l. 2)
A woman who is praised

... indicates the communal acceptance and the conformity of her behaviour with social norms, and as such is an assurance of quality by people who know her in-depth.

For me the *qasida*’s most enigmatic expression is:

Oa mke kama joya (l. 16)
Marry a woman like a joya

Sacleux (1939: 193) describes *joya* as 'substance blanche et spongieuse, remplissant l'intérieur du coco qui commence à germer: les indigènes en sont très friands.' A woman like a *joya* has several layers of meaning. On the surface level: her skin is light and soft; a beauty ideal. She 'tastes' good refers to the sensuous pleasure she promises. This can be general or sexual. Thirdly, the *joya* is hidden inside the coconut and only found when the nut is opened, which implies that the ideal wife is also a rare and hidden treasure. Being hidden here expresses the idea that a woman's place is in the house (or at least properly covered up in public), that she should not be seen by strangers. The proverb *Nyumba yangu ni joya atakaye huingia* 'My house is open like the *joya*, who wants to may enter,' in this context can be understood to mean that a good wife is obedient and docile.

Utakidhi yako haja 'you will be granted your needs' again hints at sexual satisfaction but also has a more general meaning. Sexual activities and the begetting of children is more directly spoken about with *Mchanganye na damu* 'exchange your blood'. In Islam sex is sanctioned and it is narrated that Muhammad said lawful intercourse was *sadaqa* 'charity.' Also men are advised to marry as this is directly connected to the avoidance of sin which is mentioned in the song: *uwache hadaa* 'leave behind cheating' and *usiwe muhuni* 'don't be a vagabond.'

The last stanza expresses the groom's transition to manhood. After the rite de passage of marriage he is no longer a *kijana* 'youth' but has the status of a *mtumzima* 'grown-up.' This is achieved by mentioning the regalia of a male adult: *kilemba* 'turban', *joho la mahadhamu* 'gold-thread embroidered coat.' As reminiscent of pre-revolutionary times, these clothes today also symbolise a past glory and the wearer asserts his *ustaarabu* 'arabness' but also 'civilisation' and 'refinement.'

This stanza also more specifically describes the celebration of the wedding itself by mentioning festive clothes and the singing of joyful songs.

Forthrightly, the song's advice is directed at the groom. As it wishes to induce men into marriage and the addressee has already decided to get married, this is not wholly logical and we must therefore assume that it really addresses the single male audience. Indirectly it also addresses women in the remarks on the ideal female.

Oa is a fine example for the combination of the expression of joy and love with the

giving of advice. Its composer is deeply rooted in Islamic thought and the Swahili literary traditions. While it is easy to understand on the surface level, some more layers of meaning are only to be discovered by those who carefully listen and are able to decode the *balagha* 'rhetorical figures'.

5.2 Conventional *Qasidas*

5.2.1 *Leo Tumefurahika Ar-baini* ‘Today we are happy - Arbaini’

🎵 Track 18

This *qasida* was composed by Sheikh Bakathir and remains one of the group’s classics. It is essential in every *arbaini* celebration expressing the joy at the birth of a child, explaining how he/she should behave and making a prayer. These wishes and advice are expressed through the extensive use of the subjunctive form indicated in bold below. The poem is conventional in its choice of topic, prosodic features, structure, and language. It is an altogether excellent example for a conventional *qasida* set to a typical melody and rhythm.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Leo tumefurahika | Watu wote kwa yakini |
| 2 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 3 | Arbaini imefika | Toka kuja duniani |
| 4 | Awe mwana wa baraka | Awe na nyingi imani |

*Today we are all truly happy,
Our hearts are merry, joy without example,
The arbaini has come, since coming to the world,
May he/she be a blessed child, may he/she have strong faith.*

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | Awe mwana maridhia | Na kupenda ikhwani |
| 6 | Akuwe pasi udhia | Na siha njema mwilini |
| 7 | Umwepushie balia | Na kula la nukusani |
| 8 | Rabbi atatukuzia | Kwa salama na amani |

*May he/she be a polite child, and love (his/her) siblings,
May he/she grow up without difficulty, and with good health in the body,
Save him/her from calamity, and all deprivation,
The lord he/she will glorify, with tranquillity and peace.*

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9 | Awe mwana wa huruma | Wazee awathamini |
| 10 | Umpe yaliyomema | Ya dini na duniani |
| 11 | Awe mwana wa heshima | Na huruma za moyoni |
| 12 | Awe mcheshi daima | Na bashasha za usoni |

*May he/she be a compassionate child, who values (his) elders,
Give him/her what is good, of religion and of the world,
May he/she be a respectful child, with a compassionate heart,
May he/she always be a pleasant person, with a jovial (expression) on the face.*

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 13 | Awe na mwendo mzuri | Aipende sana dini |
| 14 | Umwepushe na kila shari | Ya binadamu na jini (Sura an-Naas) |
| 15 | Awe mwana wa fakhari | Apendeze mitaani |
| 16 | Na shule awe hodari | Apasi mitihani |

*May he/she have beautiful behaviour, may he/she love religion very much,
Protect him/her from every evil, of man or djinn,
May he/she be an honourable child, that pleases the quarter,
And in school may he/she be clever, may he/she pass the exams.*

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 17 | Apende wazee wake | Daima awathamini |
| 18 | Na wazazi wa wenzake | Awaheshimu yakini |
| 19 | Hasa mama na baba yake | Awepao miguuni |
| 20 | Bibi pia babu yake | Na ukoo wa nyumbani |

*May he/she love his/her elders, always may he/she esteem them,
And the parents of his/her companions, may he/she respect them truly,
Especially his mother and father, may he/she be at (their) feet,
Also his/her grandmother and grandfather, and the family at home.*

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 21 | Rabbi mtie imani | Awasikize daima |
| 22 | Na kuwapenda moyoni | Rabbi kwa zako huruma |
| 23 | Umtie hifadhini | Na daima awe mwema |
| 24 | Umtunze rahamani | Dua tunawaomba |

*Lord, put faith in him/her, may he/she always listen to them,
And love them from the heart, Lord, for your compassion,
Keep him/her in (your) protection and may he/she always be good/pious,
Take care of him/her, Merciful One, we make a supplication for them.*

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 25 | Hapa tamma nafikia | Dua tunamuomba |
| 26 | Rabbi ipande mbinguni | Yatimie yote pia |
| 27 | Kwa uwezo wa Manani | Mwaka atapotimia |
| 28 | Tutakutana mwakani | Mungu akitujalia |

*Here I have reached the end, we make a supplication for him/her,
Lord, it may reach the heavens, everything may be accomplished completely,
With the power of the Beneficent, when he/she completes a year,
We will meet next year, if God grants us.*

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 29 | Kula ajae kwa shari | Waijua yake siri |
| 30 | Ivunje yake dhamiri | Asiweze kusimama |
| 31 | Kula ajae kwa shari | Wajua yake siri |
| 32 | Ivunje yake dhamiri | Asiweze kusimama |

*Everybody who comes with evil, they know his secret,
His intention may be broken, so that he cannot stand,
Everybody who comes with evil, they know his secret,
His intention may be broken, so that he cannot stand.*

Almost everything about this *qasida* is conventional: The metre, rhyme and language, but also its content. It is a fairly long composition in the *shairi* metre with 8:8 syllables and a middle and end rhyme in every stanza but the last.

The two first lines open the *qasida* with a profession of joy that has become a formula of its own by its frequent use in the beginning. The rest of the song is a combination of a statement of how the child should be and a prayer to God, this accounts for the preponderance of verbs in the subjunctive and some in the future or linked to a subjunctive form (either as a following infinitive or subordinate verb forms). The sheer number of these verb forms throughout the *qasida* is made visible by the bold typeface.

The main addressee of the *qasida* is the newborn who is of course not able to understand the words and who may not even be present while it is sung. However, it is believed that the power of words especially when God is appealed to in *dua* 'supplication' are effective –all the more when you pray on behalf of someone else rather than yourself. Indirectly, the whole audience is addressed as the characteristics of a good person are described:

- 1) To love one's family and respect one's parents and elders (l. 9, 17-20, 21);
- 2) To be polite, honourable, and compassionate (l. 9, 11-12);
- 3) To be clever and well educated (l. 13, 15-16);
- 4) To be healthy (l. 6).

A number of hemistichs serve as a proposition, in which the second either elaborates or simply rephrases in other words.

Line 7: *balia* and *nukusani* are synonyms

Line 12: *mcheshi* and *bashasha za usoni*

Line 15: *fakhari* 'honour, pride' is explained by *apendeze mitaani*.

Line 14 is another example of this but more importantly it is a quote from the Qur'an, from Surat Al-Nas, the last sura.

Social behaviour, especially the love within the family and respect for elders are repeated and stressed.

Religiosity is not so much stressed in the composition and is indeed one of the central statements but this only becomes clear in performance upon hearing the last line of the first stanza repeated as refrain:

Awe mwana wa baraka Awe na nyingi imani (l. 4)

May he/she be a blessed child, may he/she have strong faith.

5.2.2 *Mlango wa Nne* ‘Chapter Four’

Listen to and watch 🎵 Tracks 6-7 and 10.

As the title indicates, this *qasida* is an adaptation of the fourth chapter of the *Barzanji*. It was composed by an unknown author. Similar versions (adaptations) are in use everywhere to replace the Arabic text for this particular section.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Ilipotimu kamili | Mimba miezi miwili |
| 2 | Kwa sahihi ya kauli | Maneno yalopokewa |
| 3 | Aliifunga safari | Huyo babake bashiri |
| 4 | Akanenda Munnawwari | Madina mji wa wema |

*When the pregnancy had completed two months,
In the true speech, the words that have been received,
He travelled, he the father of the Bashiri
He went to the Illuminated, Medina the town of excellence.*

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | Kuketi mwezi kamili | Abdillahi il-hali |
| 6 | Kawazuri wote hali | Wa bani najjaria |
| 7 | Maradhi yakamshika | Mwezi mzima hakika |
| 8 | Asione kupunguka | Ila ajali hukoma |

*He stayed for a whole month, Abdallah in the meantime,
He visited all relations, of the Bani Najjar,
Illness seized him, a full month surely,
He did not see it getting better, it only ended quickly.*

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------------|
| 9 | Yalipotimu yuani | Miezi tisia yakini |
| 10 | Hunena wanazuoni | Kwa nyezi za kwandamia |
| 11 | Zikakurubia zama | Kuzaliwa Tumwa musema |
| 12 | Kutuza dunia nzima | Kazikatuwa Karima |

*When they finished, she was suffering, the nine month surely,
So the scholars say, of new moons (to appear),
When the turn came for the promised Prophet to be born
To make a gift to the whole world, he made it shine, the Generous One.*

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 13 | Usiku wenye amani | Walingia paziani |
| 14 | Mabanati wa Peponi | Mariyamu na Asiya |
| 15 | Ukamshika uchungu | Kazawa Tumwa wa Mngu |
| 16 | Zikafunguka na mbingu | Ikang'ara nuru njema |

*In a peaceful night, they entered (behind) the screen,
The Paradise daughters, Maryam and Asya,*

*Bitterness seized her, God's Prophet is born,
The sky opened and a beautiful light shone.*

Kiyamu

- 17 Wa-muḥayyan kā-shamsin [...] wa ḥuqqa al-hanā' in Arabic from the *Barzanji*
 18 Na hapa pamesuniwa Kusimama ndio sawa
 19 Sifa zake msafiwa Mazazi yake kutaya
 20 Furaha na Muangaza Kwa wenye kumtukuza
 21 Mtume wetu Aziza Shafi'i wa sote Umma

*And here it is Sunna, to stand up is right,
(When) the praises of the Pure One's birth are mentioned,
Joy and light, on those who hallow him,
Our Aziza, the Shafi'i of the Umma.*

The closing refrain or *ta'tīra* is not notated in Ibrahim's book, but sung in my recording:

- 22 Nushika Mola Jalili kaburi lake Rasuli
 23 Kwa manukato makali Ya salama na taslima

*May the Magnificent Lord perfume the grave of the Prophet,
With sweet/strong odours of peace and respect.*

This *qasida* is unusual in several ways: The metre is clearly meant to be a shairi in the way it is written with four lines. The two different end lines that run through the whole poem (b and d) can support this; they are in bold typeface. Underlined are the rhymes within the stanzas or to be more precise showing how these rhymes change after three repetitions. The resulting pattern is:

a	a
a	b
c	c
c	d

But they could also be read as two alternating end rhymes in the two-line *utenzi* metre. A further reference to the *utenzi* style are the 'Lamuisms', words that are taken from the Lamu dialect which is seen as the literary register. The word *nyezi* 'moons' (l. 10) which would be *miezi* in Standard Swahili was used as only two syllables rather than three were needed. In l. 18 instead of *-taja* 'mention' *-taya* is used to fit into the rhyme; *-nena* (l. 10) instead of *-sema* 'say,' and *-zawa* instead of

–*zaliwa* ‘be born.’

This is supported by its recital which recalls *utenzi* style especially as it is done by a single person a capella rather than chanted by a group with *madufu*. In addition, there is a refrain after every second line:

Sallallahu alayh

‘May Allah bless Him’

This bisection of each stanza would support the *utenzi* metre. However, this is of course because each two lines of the Swahili *qasida* correspond to one verse in the *Barzanji*. The patterning of lead and chorus fortifies the fact that it is a *shairi* as each stanza is closed by the chorus picking up the very last hemistich:

Lead singer	chorus
Ilipotimu kamili Mimba miezi miwili Kwa sahihi ya kauli Maneno yalopokewa	
	Sall-Allahu alayh
Aliifunga safari Huyo babake bashiri Akanenda Munnawari	
Mji wa wema	
	Sall-Allahu alayh

Figure 5.02 *Mlango wa Nne*: lead singer and chorus parts outline.

In fact, all the framing is done exactly as with all chapters of the *Barzanji* when read in Arabic. It opens with *Allahumma ṣallī wa sallim wa bārīk ‘alayh* and closes with the refrain/closing formula from the *Barzanji*:

‘Aṭṭir Allahumma qabrahū al-karīm,
Bi-‘arfin shadhiyin min ṣalātin wa-taslīm.

*Lord, perfume upon his noble grave,
With aromatic substances of peace and respect*

Nushika Mola Jalili kaburi lake Rasuli
Kwa manukato makali Ya salama na taslima

*May the Magnificent Lord perfume the grave of the Prophet,
With sweet/strong odours of peace and respect.*

As said above, this refrain is not notated in Ibrahim's manuscript, which is fairly common not only in *qasida* but also *taarab*. The lack of notation is often due to the fact that the refrain is derived in some way from the stanzas or that it is repeated routinely, both of which account for fixity or fluidity in the wording (see also 4.4.3). In this case the Ibrahim (or any other group leader) has the choice between the Arabic *taʿṭīra* and the Swahili refrain in any given performance, depending on the nature of the occasion and personal preference.

Most of the *qasida* is very close to the Arabic text while other lines are added in the Swahili version that do not appear at all in its role model. The fact that it is overall a close translation has surely contributed to the large number of Arabisms. Literary language or poetic Swahili generally contains even more loans from Arabic than so-called Standard Swahili since this has always been regarded as sophisticated. Therefore, it is sometimes hard to distinguish between the (well-integrated) loanwords and Arabisms as stylistic figures. In line 2 *kauli* 'words' is glossed by its Swahili counterpart *maneno*. Other Arabisms include: *-zuri* 'visit,' *hali* 'relatives,' and *ajali* 'quickly.'

Lines 1 and 2 are a fairly literal translation of verse 1:

Wa-lammā tamma min ḥamlihi shahrān ʿalā al-mashhūri al-aqwāl al-marwiyya
And when two months of the pregnancy were completed, according to the famous words that have been handed down.

The very straightforward mention of Abdallah's (the Prophet's father) death in verse 2, however, does not appear at all in the Swahili version:

Tuwuffiya bi-l-madīnati l-munawwarah abūhu ʿAbdu-llāh.
His father Abdallah died in Medina, the Illuminated.

Lines 3 and 4 transform this into his merely travelling to Medina (antonomasia for Yathrib). Both texts give this city an epithet that it only gets much later: *munawwari* 'illuminated', a strategy that is repeated in the *qasida* with *madina hajjaria* (l. 6) 'the town of the Hajj,' although this would really be Mecca not Medina. It may be to fill up the line but it also anticipates its importance as an Islamic *lieu de mémoire*.

Lines 5 and 6 again correspond to verse 3:

Wa kāna qadi ijtāza bi-akhwālihi banī ‘adiyin mina l-tā’ifati al-najjāriyyah

And he had been among his relations, the family ‘Adiy from the Bani Najjar.

although it leaves out the details of family names. The duration of one month is doubled in the Swahili to fill up a hemistich. The information appears in verse 4 which also mentions his illness, that comes up in line 7:

Wa-makatha fihim shahran saqīman yu‘ānūna suqmahu wa shakwāh

And he remained with them for a month, while he was ill they nursed his illness and his distresses.

The second part is in the *qasida* (l. 8) converted into the hope of his becoming better.

Lines 9 and 10 are interesting in several respects: Firstly they mention the month two times, stressing in the second instance the fact that it is an instance of lunar months, as is stated in the Arabic:

Wa-lammā tamma min ḥamlihi ‘alā al-rājiḥ tis‘atu ashhurin qamariyyah

And when his gestation had finished nine lunar months

Yalipotimu yuani	Miezi tisia yakini
Hunena wanazuoni	Kwa nyezi za kwandamia

*Know that when they drew to an end, the nine month
That is what the scholars say, nine lunar month,*

Wa-āna li-l-zamān an yanjaliya ‘anhu ṣadāh

And he suffered for a time that the echo may pass him by.

This is very different in Swahili (l. 11-12):

Zikakurubia zama	Kuzaliwa Tumwa musema
Kutuza dunia nzima	Kazikatuwa Karima

*When the turn came for the promised Prophet to be born
To make a gift to the whole world, he made it shine, the Generous One.*

Lines 13 and 14 show some invention. The simple Arabic phrase

Haḍara ummahu lailata mawliidihi āsiyah wa maryamu fī niswatin mina l-ḥaḍīrah al-quḍsiyyah

In the night of his birth his mother was with Asiya and Maryam who are among the women of Paradise.

becomes more graphic in the Swahili: the scene is set as a peaceful night, when

they enter into very private quarters. Who is this? The unknown persons are first revealed by their spiritual rank and then named Maryam and Asiya. The arrangement is in reverse order compared to the *Barzanji*. And the general emotion it procures is calm and relief: after her distress and loneliness, at least now Amina is well-looked after.

The next Arabic verse is also slightly different:

Wa-akhadhahā al-makhaḍu fawaladathu ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam nūran
yatalāla’u sanāh

*And bitterness seized her, and she bore him, may Allah’s blessing be upon him
and peace, (who is) light that shines in brightness.*

While the Arabic text only mentions Muhammad through a pronoun in bold type above and the benedictory formula, the poem clearly identifies him by his position/function *Tumwa wa Mngu* ‘God’s Prophet.’ And the triple light metaphor describing the Prophet himself is replaced by a double one that describes his effect on nature, which clearly conveys a statement about his nature as well. However, the opening of the sky is not usually associated with Muhammad’s birth but is mentioned in the Qur’an as a sign of the Day of Judgement (25: 25 and 78: 19).

On the whole, the *qasida* is an equivalent transposition of the Arabic prose text that even accounts for its structure by giving each verse two lines. It only slightly changes the emotional effect in some places. The emphasis in this *qasida* is on creating a deep emotional effect with the listeners: here understanding is crucial. As most of the audience does not understand Arabic, for the thematic peak moment of the whole *maulidi*, Swahili is used. This is then easily understood and in itself the moving story is packaged in poetry and recited in a plain style that creates pathos!

5.3 Innovative *Qasidas*

5.3.1 *Kaumba na Moto* 'And he created the Fire'

The written version of this *qasida* by Zamzam has a rather short text but the oral rendering is very powerful through the compelling rhythm/climactic tempo and the persistent repetition of the text alternating lead singer and chorus. As the title indicates, it is about Hell.

The very shortness of the text makes this *qasida* unconventional, as is the choice of topic. While the language choice is not unusual, the prosodic structure does not always adhere to classical metrical rulings. Despite the dreary topic, the music is cheerful and danceable.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Mwana Adamau sikia | yafaa kuzingatia |
| 2 | Mola Mwenyezi kaumba pepo | kwa waja wema |
| 3 | pia kaumba moto | uitwao jahanama |
| 4 | Mola Mwenyezi kaumba pepo | |
| 5 | Kaumba na moto jahannama | |

*Child of Adam [human] listen, it is appropriate to ponder
(that) God the Almighty has created Paradise, for the good people
Also he created the Fire, that is called Jahannam*

*God the Almighty has created Paradise
Also he created the Fire, Jahannam*

a	a
b	c
b	c

While the above rhyme scheme is adhered to, the number of syllables per hemistich is irregular:

8:8 10:5 7:8 10 10.

The first line of the song is directed at the audience, and in fact all humans, asking them to *sikia* 'listen' and *zingatia* 'ponder.' These two appear in the exposed end-position and rhyme. Similarly *pepo* 'paradise' and *moto* 'fire' are juxtaposed in lines 2 and 3. However, rather than adding up, these are opposites. The antithesis is

intensified by the parallel construction. Opposites are useful in arguments to establish a case indirectly. Their respective 2nd hemistichs fortify the opposition further by rhyming *waja wema* 'good people' with *jahanama* 'hell.' Interestingly, with *moto* 'Fire' a metonymy is used first, which gives a graphic description of hell. This strategy first brings a vivid picture clearly before the eyes called ekphrasis in Greek, causing an emotional response, and then names it. The double naming of Hell, especially as opposed to the single Paradise, clearly puts the stress on the first. While concerning Paradise it is openly stated that only good people will enter it, the same regarding Hell is conspicuously absent. So who are the good people who will enter Paradise? *Mja* can be neutrally translated as 'person' but also connotes 'slave,' which of course implies 'Abd-Allah 'God's slave.' The basic meaning of *-ema* is 'good' but also 'kind, generous' and more specifically 'pious.' All those who are not *waja wema* 'good people/pious believers' will go to Hell. This obvious conclusion is left to the audience. Turning things over to the hearers, an epitrope suggests proof of something without having to say it. In this case it is meant to flatter the audience in its deference.

Considering the opening requests, the audience (even if it theoretically includes the much larger audience of all humankind) is undoubtedly addressed, which makes a strong reference to the oral setting and a powerful means of involving them in what is said. Moreover, the short and simple text allows listeners to join in soon and go along with the accelerando. The refrain serves several functions (Graebner 1992: 7): it strengthens group cohesion as everybody can sing along; its persistent repetition, *conduplicatio*, amplifies the thought, expresses emotion, and stresses meaning.

The whole song prophecies payback for ill-doing and can thus be interpreted as a cataplexis, which adds yet more pathos. In conclusion, the song relies on creating pathos while still appealing to peoples reasoning.

The concisely drastic topic and wording is juxtaposed very effectively with the fast-paced rhythm and countless repetitions. In other words, the gloomy nature of the verse is balanced by its joyful rendering. Due to its terseness the *qasida* is almost *dhikr*-like: as the singers repeat the same words over and over again, in an ever faster rhythm, they experience a moment of flow, where the words themselves become empty of meaning.

5.3.2 *Sote Tunasikitika* ‘We are all Mourning’

Sote Tunasikitika is another powerful and thematically innovative *qasida* by Zamzam. As the title indicates it is about death and sadness, which is the diametrically opposed counterpart to the classic opening phrase *Sote Tunafurahika*. The style used thus subverts conventional *qasida* language.

Again, at the end of most hemistichs the rhyme has been emphasised in bold typeface, which makes the petering out of rhyme towards the end more visible.

It is perhaps the earliest example of such a clear statement on a current issue in a *qasida* in Zanzibar.

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | Sote tunasikitika | machozi yanatutoka |
| 2 | Watu wanatuondoka | wanaiağa dunia |
| | <i>We are all mourning, tears are coming out of our (eyes)</i> | |
| | <i>People are leaving us, they say farewell to the world</i> | |
| 3 | Ukimwi kitu | kitu hatari |
| 4 | Sote natujihadhari | tunatoa tahadhari |
| 5 | Ukimwi unatuuwa | |
| | <i>AIDS is a thing, a dangerous thing</i> | |
| | <i>We should all guard ourselves, we issue a warning</i> | |
| | <i>AIDS kills us</i> | |
| 6 | Tutoeni kampeni | kampeni za kidini |
| 7 | Kupitia redioni | na kwenye televisheni |
| | <i>Let's mount a campaign, a religious campaign</i> | |
| | <i>Through the radio, and through TV</i> | |
| 8 | Mwanangu nilikwambia | lakini hukusikia |
| 9 | Sina la kusaidia | ila nakuhurumia |
| | <i>My child I told you but you would not listen</i> | |
| | <i>(Now) I cannot help you but to have pity for you</i> | |
| 10 | Kwa wale waloupata | wautangaze haraka |
| 11 | Matibabu kuyapata | ya afya njema yafaa |
| | <i>To those who got it, they should announce so quickly</i> | |
| | <i>To get treatment, for good health is the proper thing</i> | |
| 12 | We tell all the people about dangerous | |
| 13 | Please don't take it | |
| 14 | Your danger is | |

*We tell all the people about the danger
Please do not contract this
Do not go crazy*

This is a *qasida* about AIDS composed and performed by Zamzam. For a religious poem to address this issue may seem unusual, however it ties in well with the homiletic nature of Swahili *qasida*, as well as with the quite explicit and detailed treatment of sexuality in the Islamic tradition. Even then, it is remarkable that this *qasida* is so outspoken about a Swahili taboo.

They seek to raise awareness about a social rather than a medical problem and through the religiously backed genre of *qasida* they are able to raise awareness about an otherwise taboo subject.

At first sight this *qasida* appears to be rather randomly scribbled down. Obviously, this poem is not composed in one of the classical metres, however, rhyme and number of syllables still play a role in the composition. As is clear from the highlighted rhymes there is not one single pattern but more of a free play. The same applies to the *mizani*:

8:8; 8:7

5:5; 8:8

7:7; 8:8

8:8; 8:8

8:8; 8:8

Similarly, the structuring is interesting as it does not display the regular opening and closing parts or a narrative element that runs through the whole poem. It seems more like the duplication of a pattern with the first and fourth stanza being the emotional parts that describe the sorrow felt when people die. And the second, third, fifth, and sixth stanza talk about possible counter-actions. Or even more closely, stanzas two and six merely state that AIDS is dangerous and that one should take care while stanzas three and five mention more matter-of-fact action: treatment and public information.

The thematic patterning would look like this:

A B C A C B

On the stylistic level, a comparable degree of planning is evident and supports the content of the respective stanzas. Pathos is created in various ways: The very first line sets out the use of 'we' throughout the poem which is a *pluralis modestiae* but also suggests that AIDS affects us all, the whole society, which makes it the perfect pronoun for an emphatic appeal for action. This 'we' is juxtaposed with 'they' referring to those who have AIDS: They are only mentioned in this unspecific and anonymous mass to distance the speaker from them. Stanza 1 employs the plural to add emphasis by the sheer amount of people dying and mourning. Both ideas are further augmented by repeating them in other words: the unambiguous *sikitika* 'feel sorry' is rephrased by a vivid description of mourning *machozi* 'tears.' Dying is referred to by two euphemisms that both play on the theme of leaving. The stanza also creates suspense by first mentioning mourning without reason, which is then released in the next line. At the same time line 2 throws up the next question: why do they die?

After this emotionally involving preparation Stanza 2 hits the audience by its explicitness as it names the disease twice and its deathly effect:

Ukimwi unatuuwa 'AIDS kills us' (l. 5)

In-between these blunt declarations comes the first exhortative statement, that is again doubled and plays on the word *hadhari* (polyptoton, figura etymologica). As in line 6, line 3 features an anadiplosis (*kampeni* 'campaign' and *kitu* 'thing'), which are used to the full by the caesura that divides them and enhances the effect of proposition and answer (the second part elaborating on the proposed expression). The two stanzas are further linked through their content: the warning that is issued in line 4 becomes a fully fledged media campaign in lines 6 and 7. Modern media are in this *qasida* not described as evil elements that destroy values but are more pragmatically interpreted as means to spread useful information – in a religious framework (*kampeni ya kidini* 'a religious campaign'). Although in a different context, this example illustrates the statement by the Tarbiya founders who explained that any topic could be treated in *qasida* but would be appropriated and reviewed within an Islamic/religious context. This is, of course, true of the *qasida* as a whole.

The next stanza picks up on the first as both tell a story about sadness, although in contrast to the plurals, there it uses singular forms to bring the emotional experience even closer to the listener. The seemingly real story about failed advice that is interspersed in this rather educational poem gives it extra pathos. *Mwanangu* 'my child' does not necessarily stand for a parent-child relationship but is an expression of affection for the person. It also serves to address someone specific, thus it changes deixis completely and appears as direct speech, dialogue between (imagined) characters in a play. This makes it an interesting example of dramatic effect, in its theatricality and affectivity. The theme of lamenting the ruin of a dear child who did not take advice also comes up in a *taarab* song by Ali Mkali *Kijakazi Saada* '(Slave) Girl Saada' which is based on one of the oldest known Swahili poems by Fumo Liyongo.

The language is also remarkable: all the rhyme words are verbs that have to do with social interaction. *-ambia* 'tell someone' and *-hurumia* 'have pity on someone' are in the prepositional verb form that designates doing something for someone.

5.3.3 Amina

♪ Track 24

This *qasida* composed by Ustadh Amani Ussi Ame for Tarbiya Islamiya from Mfereji wa Wima is innovative in two ways, textually and musically. However, at the same time it is also traditional or conventional both textually and musically.

Innovative is the strongly moralistic message worded in an unambiguous and even accusatory tone.

1 Amina Amina Ya Rabbi Amina

Amen, Amen, Oh Lord, Amen.

2 Baba na mama jinsi gani mnajidharau

3 Amri ya Bwana sala tano mnazisahau

4 Huu ulimwengu isilamu unaghururika

5 Siku ya kiyama hasara itatufika

*Father and mother, how are you degrading yourselves,
(disobeying) the Lord's order, the five prayers you forget them,
This world of Islam is fatuous/deluded/conceited,
On the Day of Judgement, loss/spoil will come to us.*

6 Ewe dada yangu usiringe kwa uzuri wako

7 Kanzu yako ndefu na viatu miguuni mwako

8 Utabaki nayo sanda na ubao wako

9 Utabaki wewe na mchanga na amali yako

*Oh you, my sister, don't put on airs about your beauty,
With your long dress and the shoes on your feet,
You will be left with you burial cloth and plank,
You will be left with only sand and your deeds.*

10 Na hasa vijana kina kaka mnahadaika

11 Wana na mama ibilisi anawatikita

12 Wangapi watoto wadogo wanaotutoka

13 Kila chenye roho mauti yamemuandama

*And especially you, the male youths, you are deceived,
Children and mothers, the devil chew them,
How many small children leave us,
Everyone with a soul death reaches them*

14 Allahu Allahu Allahu Ya Allah

15 Allahu Allahu Allahu Ya Allah

*Allah, Allah, Allah, oh Allah,
Allah, Allah, Allah, oh Allah.*

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 16 | Adhabu ya kaburini | sala tano zipokee |
| 17 | Moyo ushike yakini | kampe akupendae |
| 18 | Kuna tangu pima kumi | akhera akuombee |
| 19 | Atakuzonga mwilini | upate kukaa nae |

*The torment of the grave replace with the five prayers,
Hold on to the truth in your heart, give it to the one who loves you,
There are five, measure ten, he/she will supplicate for you,
He/she will turn you around/ embrace you, that you may live with him/her.*

Refrain

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| 20 | Swalli leo | |
| 21 | Baba | Swalli leo |
| 22 | Mama | Swalli leo |
| 23 | Kesho kesho kila siku | kesho kiyama |

*Pray today
Father, pray today,
Mother, pray today,
Tomorrow, tomorrow, every day, tomorrow is the Day of Judgement.*

Although this *qasida* prosodically adheres to the rules of classical Swahili poetry and employs a subjunctive it's tone is quite different from conventional *qasidas*.

It addresses several groups of people directly (each in a stanza). The first stanza sets out a particularly interesting relationship as it addresses parents in a bottom-up conversation. The assertive statements are only to a certain extent masked by being sung and intergrated into a religious argument. By addressing father and mother all elders are accused of neglecting their prayer which is not only a disobedience to God but will consequently result in the whole Muslim umma's downfall. The use of *baba na mama* 'father and mother' is very effective here in its ambiguity. It expresses both a deferential attitude of the speaker towards an older generation but at the same time it implies their responsibility as role models. Through the juxtaposition with *Bwana* 'Master,' a level of authority is added that supersedes that of any human.

The second stanza tackles the behaviour of (young) women. Again they are addressed as *dada* 'sister,' at once a term of endearment and a title that signals

respect for an elder sibling. Their behaviour, however, is criticised straightforwardly as arrogance: *Usiringe kwa uzuri wako* ‘Don’t put on airs about your beauty’ (line 6). How this arrogance manifests itself is explained in the next line: *kanzu ndefu na viatu* ‘long dress and shoes.’ After these observation of the current situation, the *dada* ‘sister’ are told what will happen to them in the second half of the stanza. Namely, instead of a dress and shoes, they will only have a burial cloth and a plank of wood on which they will be carried to their grave. The parallel mention of dress and burial cloth and shoes and wooden plank (in lines 7 and 8) vividly contrast the two images:

Kanzu yako ndefu	na viatu miguuni mwako
Utabaki nayo sanda	na ubao wako

Similarly the first and last lines of the stanza says what will remain instead of *uzuri* ‘beauty’ and *kuringa* ‘put on airs’ are *mchanga* ‘dust’ and *amali* ‘deeds.’

The third stanza picks up another theme of religious (but not usually *qasida*) discourse: the attitude of youths to death and their denial of it happening to them. After having already addressed women, here they single out the young men, *vijana kina kaka* ‘male youths.’ They are being asked a rhetorical question: ‘How many small children leave us?’ (line 12) and given the answer in the next: ‘Everyone with a soul, death reaches them.’ For added effect the proposed question uses a euphemistic term for dying *-toka* ‘leave,’ while the (expected) answer mentions death in the emphasised rhyme position and personifies it thus making death an active agent who will spare no one.

After this severe criticism of both old and young generations, men and women, the *qasida* turn to Allah by very invoking him repeatedly by his name:

Allahu Allahu Allahu Ya Allah
 Allahu Allahu Allahu Ya Allah
Allah, Allah, Allah, oh Allah,
Allah, Allah, Allah, oh Allah.

This simple but not simplistic lament is an outcry of desperation and appeal, or a *dua* ‘supplication’ to Allah. The advice that follows

Adhabu ya kaburini	sala tano zipokee
Moyo ushike yakini	kampe akupendae

Kuna tangu pima kumi	akhera akuombee
Atakuzonga mwilini	upate kukaa nae

*The torment of the grave replace with the five prayers,
Hold on to the truth in your heart, give it to the one who loves you,
There are five, measure ten, he/she will supplicate for you,
He/she will turn you around/ embrace you, that you may live with him/her.*

The intro as a kind of preface foreshadowed a prayer, and thus a more hopeful message. If the *dua* will be accepted, by God's power the Muslim Umma or more specifically Zanzibari society would reform. At heart, they place their trust in God. However, this could also be interpreted as a sign of desperation, God's intervention is the last resort.

All this is framed by the refrain that calls on everyone, and more specifically again invokes mother and father, to pray. Not simply pray, but is says 'pray today' as no one has promised you tomorrow. The quick passing of time is beautifully rendered by the repetition of *kesho* 'tomorrow.' At first it seems to say 'pray today and tomorrow' but then it merges into tomorrow is the Day of Judgement. This close association of the present with the future is emphasised by the resounding 'k' as alliteration.

On the whole, the *qasida* has a very straightforward message for all Zanzibaris, namely to turn to God, but it balances the diction with a beautiful melody and singing style.

5.3.4 Vifo Vya Albino ‘The Deaths of Albinos’

♪ Track 23

Despite the fact that the group Madrasatul Ghazal Islamiya is from Dar es Salaam, this *qasida* was included here because it was (and still is) immensely popular, on the mainland, in Zanzibar, and even in Kenya.

This video *qasida* is innovative in several respects. Most prominently the instrumentation and the fact that it is accompanied by a *video* put it into the *kiModern* category. Furthermore, the choice of topic, the killing of Albino which is a pressing current issue in Tanzania, make it innovative. However, this topic is presented in rather conventional language and in a single *qasida* and classical metrical composition. The duet between father and daughter, in other words the performance, is what makes it stand out. This combination of innovative and conventional features makes is another good example to illustrate the balancing of tradition and modernity.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Baba mimi nawachukiya | Walee wanaoamua |
| 2 | Alibino kuwauwa | Viungo vyao kuvichukua |
| 3 | Ikishakwenda kuwapelekeya | Wale wanowambiya |
| 4 | Miviungo ukinileteya | wee tajiri utakuwa |

*Father, I despise those, who resolve to,
Kill the albinos, by taking their limbs.
When they have taken them to those who tell them:
‘If you bring me limbs, you will be rich.’*

kitikiyo

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Tunawalani waso imani | walojaa hapa nchini |
| 6 | Wanaowaua alibino | kwa makosa gani |
| 7 | Twaomba tuwambiyeni | hii ni akili gani |
| 8 | Nyee yakushiriki imani | hii ni akili gani |
| 9 | Nyee Mola anawalani | |

Refrain

*We condemn those without faith who are so many in this country
Who kill the albinos, for what mistake?
We want to tell you: What kind of reasoning is this?
To involve faith in this, What kind of reasoning is this?
God condemns you.*

- 10 Sipeke mwanangu unachukiya hata mimi baba yako naumiya
 11 Kiongozi wa nchi analiya mawaziri na wabunge wajinamiya
 12 Wananchi wote wazungumziya kwa kuona vifo vyaendeleya
 13 Walemavu wangozi wanauliwa viungo vyao vyachukuliwa

*You are not alone my child in despising, even me, your father, I hurt,
 The leader of the country cries the ministers and MPs grief-stricken,
 All citizens speak about it, as they see the deaths going on
 The disabled of skin are being killed, their limbs are taken away.*

- 14 Kwa kuona vifo vyaendeleya walemavu wa ngozi wanauliwa
 15 Na viungo vyao vyachukuliwa eti utajiri kutafutiya

*To see the deaths going on, the disabled of skin are being killed,
 Their limbs are taken away, in the search of wealth.*

- 16 Tunawalani tunawalaaaa waso na imani waso na imanii
 17 Walojaa hapa nchini walojaa hapa nchini walojaa hapa nchini
 18 Wanawauwa maalbino kwa makosa gani kwa makosa gani kwa makosa gani
 19 Twaomba tuambiyeni

*We despise them, the people without faith, without faith
 They have become many in this country, they have become many in this country,
 they have become many in this country,
 Albinos are being killed, for which mistake/crime? for which mistake/crime? for
 which mistake/crime?
 We ask you to explain us.*

The language of this *qasida* is repetitive, simple and straightforward, ideal to deliver the message to everyone. This is supported by the upbeat music and the melismatic rendition of the rhyming syllables, which have certainly contributed to its popularity.

Stylistically noteworthy is the expression of emotion in a first person singular in lines one and then as opposed to the usual communal 'we'.

However, in the refrain that is sung by a chorus the *qasida*-typical 'we' does occur in *tunawalaani* 'we condemn' (line 5) and even more iconically combined with *-omba* 'ask for' in line 7.

Also, the *qasida* follows convention in its third person description of the murderers of albinos. In fact, they are 'othered' by not naming them but only identifying them as a people who kill albinos because of greed and lack of faith. A position strikingly similar to another song on the same topic, for which see 6.2.2.

'They' are mentioned as killing albinos (lines 2, 7 and 18) and taking their limbs (line 2), which is further specified by their doing it consciously : *wanaamua* (line 1) 'they decide.' All of these last are active verb forms, diametrically opposed to the exact same verbs but in passive voice used for the albinos. They are being killed: *wanauliwa* and their limbs are being taken: *viungo vyachukuliwa* 'their limbs are taken' (lines 13 & 14-15). This passivity emphasises their being without fault.

The culpability of the murderers is also stressed by two repeatedly asked rhetorical questions. The first, appearing in the refrain focuses on the perpetrators: *hii ni akili gani?* 'What kind of reasoning is this?' (lines 7-8), of course implying that there is no sound reasoning for this. A variation appears in the final refrain, *kwa makosa gani?* 'for which mistake or crime?' again underlines the albinos' status as error-free victims of horrendous crimes.

The condemnation of the killers has four levels. Firstly, the personal emotional response of father and daughter as *nachukia* 'I despise, hate' (line 1) and *naumia* 'I am hurting' (line 10).

Secondly, their feelings are mirrored by political leaders, who cry, which is visually supported by tears running down the daughter's cheeks and the general public, who all talk about it (line 12).

As a third level, there is the communal 'we' represented in performance by chorus, father, and daughter singing unisono: *Tunawalaani* 'we condemn' (line 5). Ultimately, this is matched exactly by God, who also condemns them *Mola anawalaani* (line 9), also justifying their own condemnation.

Despite the fact that 'we' asks to understand (lines 7 & 19), the *qasida* offers two explanations itself. The obvious twice mentioned (lines 4 & 15) reason for them is money or *utajiri* 'wealth.' This however, is dismissed as by making it something the killers are being promised by the ones who buy the limbs (line 4). And in the second instance it is reduced to the merely the search for wealth. These two discreditations allude to the belief that money earned through criminal activities will either not last or not make happy (pers. comm. Abubakar Mikidad and Talib Ali Talib, November 2011).

The second explanation is that the killers are *waso imani* 'without faith' (lines 5 & 16). Here cause and effect are blurred; it is not clear whether they kill because

they have no faith or because they kill they have lost faith. The killers or buyers are accused of offering belief as a justification in line 8. Here the *qasida* alludes to the fact that the cut-off limbs are being used by *wachawi* 'sorcerers' as miracle cures for diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS. This is discredited as a false belief through being followed by the same rhetorical question, 'What kind of reasoning is this?' and their above mentioned faithlessness. As Muslims, the composers do not only condemn the murder but also the magico-religious belief leading to it.

Although the *qasida* is written in clear, simple language, it is by no means simplistic but employs a number of rhetorical techniques given in chapter four in an effective way. The text is supported by compelling performative features. Among them is the music as mentioned above and the use of different voices. Besides the choice of topic, the fact that this *qasida* is a duet is perhaps the most unusual and innovative about it. Duets are rare but not unknown of in *taarab*, e.g. *Subalkheri Mpenzi* 'Good Morning my dear' by Culture Musical Club.

In *qasidas*, the distribution of different qualities of voice is a ubiquitous stylistic feature. This is evident in not only in the division of stanzas sung by a lead singer and the refrain by the chorus, but also by the fact that the chorus mostly consists of boys before the puberty vocal change or girls. Although there might be more than one lead singer, who share the stanzas between them, a duet that is clearly marked as such in the text is unique. The girl in the video starts out addressing her father with *baba* 'dad' who answers her in his stanza with *mwanangu* 'my child.' This technique not only allows them to mention personal feelings but the dramatic effect turns it into a narrative and thus makes it all the more powerful. Although the duet would still be impressive in an audio recording, it is perfect for the new medium of a music video.

5.4 Conclusions

Through the presentation of whole *qasidas* in this chapter we have seen how their features as presented in the previous chapter work together.

By first introducing some classics and conventional compositions, we could see more clearly in which ways *qasidas* can be innovative: thematically, stylistically or structurally. Therefore, the classification into three groupings, classics, conventional and innovative contemporary compositions, is a reasonable one. However, even within these groupings there is considerable variety, as well as overlap between the groupings.

It is important to remember that this classification is not a local one, but mine derived from the examination of the material collected. Neither is it meant to be anything more than an analytical tool to bring out the features of specific *qasidas*.

Accordingly, is obvious how rather than being a constraint to creativity, the boundaries of the genre seem to challenge contemporary composers to use the limited means to create fresh and meaningful new poems. They achieve this by carefully balancing convention and innovation.

The re-using of templates, phrases, and ideas will be explored further in the next chapter on intertextual phenomena.

Chapter Six

Sources, Allusions & Associations



As a third step in the textual analysis this chapter will look at inter-textual phenomena, the sources and inspirations of *qasida*, as well as allusions to and associations with other texts both of other genres and within *qasida*. Another aspect of this will be the construction of texts in performance, ranging from whole pre-composed songs to recombinations of pre-composed elements to on-the-spot improvisations, showing how different contexts make new meanings.

In an attempt to avoid jargon, the term intertextuality will be substituted by 'intertextual phenomena' for describing the quality of (literary) texts to relate to other texts. The concept of genre relies on the assumption that there are groupings of similarities in these relationships between texts. In the case of *qasida*, this refers to the fact that they have textual relations with other *qasidas* and to other kinds of texts. In the following I will describe and analyse these.

Theories of intertextuality have picked up on the long recognised notion that literary (and indeed any kind of) texts do not exist in a vacuum. Terms like imitation and parody, have been used since classical rhetoric. Furthermore, the notion of literary genres is unthinkable without the presumption of intertextual references as the sheer classification of a text as a type already implies differences to and similarities with other texts.

In principle, there are two kinds of concepts of intertextuality. For the first, intertextuality is simply a mode of describing conventional references between texts. The other conceives intertextuality in a broader and more comprehensively ontological sense to refer to all kinds of references in a qualitative manner. While the descriptive approach seeks to clarify the intention and specific allusions of one author to the work of another author, the ontological term 'intertextuality' originated from a more radical theoretical project, that sought to undermine the notion of authorial intentionality as well as the unity and autonomy of a 'work.'

The term 'intertextuality' coined by Kristeva in 1966 (Irwin 2004: 227) will not be used as it has since attained an imprecise meaning. Another reason to avoid the term is that even Kristeva's (1972, 1980) and Barthes' (1970, 1981) original notion of 'intertextuality' is unhelpful. As William Irwin argues, it denies authorial intentionality: 'Authorial intention is unavoidable; intertextual connections are not

somehow magically made between inanimate texts but are the products of authorial design. To think otherwise is to commit the Referential Fallacy' (2004: 240). He concludes that the use of the term 'intertextuality' was dubious, as it implied that language and texts operate independently of human agency. 'While, in a sense, allusions are inter-textual phenomena, they are more properly and precisely described as authorial-textual phenomena. Unintended connections between texts are [...] better called "accidental associations"' (Irwin 2004: 240).

However, Kristeva's notion of actualisations of earlier paroles and literary character types, themes, and stories that come into play in the creation of a text, as a mosaic of quotations, or an 'absorption and transformation of other texts' (1972: 348, 1980: 66), is productive for the analysis of contemporary *qasidas*, because it stresses the creativity involved and the gradual disappearance of associations. Especially through her inclusion of the social world – the social text – in this system is a fruitful approach for the understanding of the emergence as well as exegesis of a text.

A similar idea is Fiske's distinction between horizontal and vertical intertexts. While horizontal intertext operates between 'primary texts that are more or less explicitly linked, usually along the axes of genre, character, or content' vertical intertext is at work between 'a primary text and other types of text that refer explicitly to it' (1987:108). According to this differentiation, the present chapter refers to what he calls horizontal intertextual phenomena only, whereas especially chapter 2.5 is concerned with vertical references or discourses about *qasida/maulidi*.

Within the intertextual phenomena outlined in this chapter, I distinguish between three kinds. First, the broader origins or inspirations for *qasida*, mainly from the Qur'an and the *Mawlid* texts. Second, the intertextual relations with genres other than *qasida*, both local and trans-local. And third the *qasida*-internal intertextual relations, which includes remarks on authorship.

Regarding the two languages of *qasida*, Arabic and Swahili, a further distinction that seeks to unravel 'pointing' to other texts through repeating meanings in different words and using the original thought in its Arabic form,¹¹⁴ might be useful. While there certainly is a difference between the use of the two, their intelligibility and

¹¹⁴ I am grateful to Graham Furniss for this suggestion and the countless others that I have failed to acknowledge in situ.

effect, it is impossible to generalise these as they are highly contextual in that they depend on the individual composer's and the individual listener's proficiency of the two languages. Beyond broad references to the iconic value of Arabic and the higher intelligibility of Swahili made throughout this chapter and the thesis, the implications of using either language lie in the eye of the beholder and do not entail the composer's intentions.

This ties in well with Barthes' (1970) assertion that intertextuality not only exists between texts but is also inscribed in the active process of reading, i.e. the reader approaches a text from a perspective of a multitude of other texts that he or she is familiar with.

6.1 ORIGINS, SOURCES & INSPIRATIONS (SACRED TEXTS, *MAWLIDS*)

Among the inspirations for *qasida* are the Sacred Texts (the Qur'an¹¹⁵ and to a lesser extent the Hadith), *Mawlid*-compositions (the *Mawlid Barzanji nathr* and *naẓm*, al-Būṣṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-Burda*) as well as a range of local musical and literary genres. Some *qasidas* can be described as creative adaptations of Arabic texts, whose general theme is arranged in Swahili *mashairi* 'poetry,' *kupangapanga maneno* 'to arrange around the words' (Nassor from Tarbiya Islamiya, August 2008). A good example of this that is frequently used by many *qasida* groups is adaptations of the fourth chapter of the *Barzanji*, which relates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (see below).

Bakathir even has two different versions, however, they use only one of them in performance. Moreover, adaptations of the first three chapters, that are also not sung any more, unless on special request from the hosts (pers. comm. Ibrahim, January 2010).¹¹⁶

Much more frequent than the adaptations of full texts are shorter forms like idiomatic expressions and formulae that become amalgamated into *qasida* texts. Typical examples are translations of the stock phrase *Allahumma ṣallī wa sallim ʿalayh (wa ʿalā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi)* 'bestow blessings and peace upon him (and upon his family and followers)', which is used either as an opening or closing formula. Typical verbs are –*salia* 'pray for someone' (a loan from the Arabic *ṣallā*) –*peleka* 'send,' –*shukia* 'send down on someone,' –*enda* 'go,' and –*shushiza* 'make to go down on' that all denote the direction of the wishes upon the Prophet.

Ewe Mola msalie Rehema zimshukie (B25)

Oh Lord bless him, mercy may descend upon him

Ewe Mola msalie Salamu zimshukie (B26)

Oh Lord bless him, peace may descend upon him

¹¹⁵ Nizar Qabbani (Syrian poet 1923-98 AD) calls it *qaṣīdat Allah* 'Allah's *qasida*'! Cited from Kermani (2000: 95). He further says that 'from God's throat flows poetry' (Qabbānī 1963: 90).

¹¹⁶ The full texts of these *qasidas* can be found in the appendix.

Sala njema na salamu	Zimshukie Hashimu
Na sahabaze kiramu	Na Isilamu pamoja (B5)

*A good blessing and peace, may descend upon the Respectable,
And upon his noble followers, and all Muslims together*

Rabbi peka sala	Na salamu pia
Zende kwa Rasula	Alokurashia
Sahaba na ala	Na walofatia (B8)

*Oh Lord send blessings, and also peace,
To go to the Prophet, of the Quraysh,
To his followers and relations, and those who followed (his way).*

Rabbi Mshushize Sala	Mtume na wake ala
Na sahabaze jumla	Na salamu zikishuka (B9)

*Lord send blessings upon, the Prophet and his relations,
And all his followers, and peace may come down.*

Sala ya Mola Karimu	Yende kwa wake Nabia
Na sahaba maalimu	Pamoja na ala pia (B13)

*The blessing of the generous God, may go to His Prophet,
And the learned followers, together with all his family.*

Sala na salamu	Zimshukie
Hashimu	Nabii Muhammad
Yeye wa Mwanzo	Ndie wa Mwisho
Ali na sahaba (B15)	

*Blessings and peace, may descend upon
The Respectable, Prophet Muhammad,
He is the First, and he is indeed the Last
(Upon) his relations and followers.*

Sala njema na Salamu	Zimshukie Hashimu
Na sahabaze Kiramu	Nasi sote isilamu
Kwa jaha ya Muadhamu	Tupe Jannatu Naimu (B18)

*Good blessings and peace, may descend upon the Respectable,
And his noble followers, and all us Muslims,
By the glory of the Excellent, give us the blissful Paradise.*

Rabbi Mola msalie	Rehema zimshukie
Na jaha mzidishie	Kipenzi chako Nabia
Na Ali zake wa kheri	Khususu Abubakari
Athumani na Omaari	Ali nduguye Nabia

Na Ali zake wa kheri	Khususa Abubakari
Athumani na Omaari	Ali nduguye Nabia
Nasi tupe njalomema	Leo na Kesho kiama
Sote tupate Salama	Kwa jaha yako Nabia (B14)

*Lord, Protector, bless him, send mercy upon him,
And increase his glory, your beloved, the Prophet,
And his blessed relations, especially Abu Bakr,
Othman and Omar, who was the Prophet's brother.*

*And his blessed relations, especially Abu Bakr,
Othman and Omar, (and) Ali the Prophet's brother [cousin].
And us, give us what is good, today and tomorrow at Judgement Day,
So that we all attain peace, by your glory, oh Prophet.*

These examples show very clearly how the Arabic formula is not only translated into Swahili but expanded into longer *dua* that include most commonly his family and followers, and as in the last example also 'us,' everyone present at the performance, or indeed all today's followers of Muhammad, i.e. all Muslims.

Ṣallā Allāhu 'alayh is the formula repeated as the chorus line after every other sentence of the *Barzanji*. Sometimes this is sung in Swahili:

Rehema za Mola zimshukie Bwana Mtume.

The mercy of the Lord may come down on (our) Master the Prophet.

This change of language is indicated by the teacher or lead singer and mainly done 'for a change' (Ibrahim Bakar Salum).

Allahumma ṣallī wa-sallim wa-bārik 'alāyh is the opening and closing formula of each chapter and after each *qasida*. In the Swahili versions of chapter four this is rendered as:

Ewe Mola msalie Salamu zimshukie (B 20:1)

For the closing formula to each chapter and its Swahili counterpart see below.

An expression that is commonly recited just before the beginning of the *Barzanji* but does not seem to be part of the text itself (Barzanjī 2009: 5) is:

Al-jannatu wa-na'īmuhā

Paradise and its beatitude (Barzanjī circa 2008: 21)

Jannatu naima

And other spellings (B12:16; B18:26; K5:18)

Ultimately the term seems to originate from a description of the highest level of Paradise in the Qur'an: 'For these will be the ones brought nearest to God **in Gardens of Bliss** [fī jannāt al-naʿīm].' (56: 11-12; emphasis mine). Whether the idiom found in Zanzibari *qasida* texts derives from the Qur'an or the *Barzanji*, or indeed both, is impossible to tell. What is certain is that the expression has become a standard phrase for putting feelings of the highest pleasure into words. This usage also occurs in other (poetic) genres. An example of this is a *taarab* song by Zuhura Swaleh (circa 1970) in which she calls her beloved *janatu naimu*:

Ewe Janatu Naimu

Oh you, beatific paradise.

At a rehearsal session (18.01.2012), Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni practiced a *qasida* that had been newly introduced a couple of days before. During the practice *dahala* it was not clear which parts of the lyrics were lead parts and which were to be sung by the chorus. Afterwards they all discussed how to juxtapose lead and chorus parts lead by the *khalifa*, Suleiman, and Alawi who composed the *qasida*, and ended with a vocal run-through of the whole sequence but without the many repetitions that would occur in a performance or even the full-blown rehearsal, i.e. with drums.

Al-jannatu wa-naʿīmuḥā saʿadu li-mā
Al-jannatu wa-naʿīmuḥā saʿadu li-man

*Paradise and its beatitude, fortune on who,
Paradise and its beatitude, fortune on who;*

Refrain:

Saʿadu li-man saʿadun ʿalayh
Saʿadu li-man saʿadun ʿalayh
Saʿadu li-man saʿadun ʿalayh

*Fortune on who, fortune on him,
Fortune on who, fortune on him,
Fortune on who, fortune on him,*

In between the refrain lines, Alawi inserted short stanzas, that he tried out to see if they would fit in. His choice of words, however, was met with criticism:

Waliosema hayawi
Mbona leo yamekuwa

*Those who said it would not be,
Why has it happened today?*

And:

Vigelegele kidogo
Tuifanye ada ndogo
Some ululations!
Let us make it a small feast.

All the words were rejected for further use because they are derived from *maulidi ya dufu*. This is telling about genre and cross-group intertextuality. It is acceptable, to a degree at least, to borrow from *qasidas* across groups within the *maulidi ya dufu*-circuit. For *Maulidi ya Homu* to use *maulidi ya dufu* tesseræ is off-limits, and they object to the use of theirs by *maulidi ya dufu* groups.¹¹⁷ Thus, although both types of text are referred to as *qasida*, they are clearly distinct.

This separation is especially interesting as the Arabic *qasida* above is derived from the opening line of *Mawlid Barzanji*, the natural realm of *maulidi ya dufu*. Again, when the distance to the source of inspiration, be it spatially or as here temporally, is big enough, borrowing is acceptable. The same applies, when the source is not known (any more). But is also tolerable to borrow within *maulidi ya dufu*. In other words, appropriation of the closest and far sources but not known local genres is normal (cf. below 6.2.2).

Another classic *Maulidi ya Homu qasida* is clearly also derived from the *Mawlid Barzanji*. However, not from the Arabic prose text that is read today but from a Swahili adaptation by Seyyid Mansab composed probably in the second half of the 19th century. Seyyid Mansab (born 1829) was a prominent Swahili scholar of the Shafii *madhhab* who was originally from Lamu, had studied both in Mecca and in Yemen and was appointed Qadhi at Zanzibar by Sultan Seyyid Majid b. Said.

In Harries' (1958: 32-33) version it is verse 14 of the actual poem:

Uliposhusha mwezi dhahiri	zikasitamana zote kamari
Siyamuonapo mtu mzuri	uso wa furaha kama hashima

Which he translates as:

¹¹⁷ During a *Maulidi ya Mtume* at Meli Nane, Bububu, a *maulidi ya dufu* group picked up *Hua Maulana* from *Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni*, 13.03.2010.

When the full moon shone down all (other) moons were extinguished,
I have never seen so lovely a person with a happy face of dignity.

Although the words are arranged differently and even render slightly and more drastically different meanings, the similarity of the *Maulidi ya Homu qasida* is striking:

Ulipashuzile mwezi zahiri
Zikashikamana zote kamari
The moon split visibly
And the stars held on to each other

Sijamuanapo mtu mzuri zaidi
Ya Mtume
I have not seen anyone more beautiful than
The Prophet

Uso wa furaha kama hashima (H4:5-9)
A face of gladness like the Honourable

The difference in wording has two not mutually exclusive explanations: The first being as Harries explains, that he did not see Mansab's original manuscripts which were lost but a manuscript by 'the well-known copyist, Abdallah b Rashidi bin Muhammad b Rashid al-Mazrui, who copied many other poems at the end of the nineteenth century' (1958: 27) whose script however was 'not good. He frequently omits letters and in a few places a word is missing' (Harries 1958: 28). It could well be that some changes from Mansab's composition have been altered through Abdallah Rashidi's rendering. It is also unknown which original he copied from or if it was a transliteration of an oral performance or from memory. Furthermore, the poem was probably performed in Zanzibar at the end of the 19th century. It is impossible to know whether this specific version was widely or rarely performed, or even just once, who heard it and how often (or maybe read?) and who may have introduced it to *Maulidi ya Homu*. The further trajectory of the text within the *Maulidi ya Homu* tradition which relies mostly on oral transmission can also have contributed to alterations of the text. Seyyid Mansab's composition has travelled over time and space, it is still identifiable even though its history and the knowledge of its source is lost in Zanzibar.

The source texts themselves are not always any longer known locally, as the following example illustrates. This line from one of Bakathir's *qasidas* clearly resonates with Sura Al-Nās, the last sura of the Qur'an.

Umwepushe na kila shari Ya binadamu na jini (B2:14)

Protect him/her from every evil, of man or djinn.

'From the evil [...] [f]rom among the jinn and mankind.' (Qur'an 114: 4-6)

Obvious quotations are not only common but also not considered a blemish or incapacity of the author, rather the insertions of quotes from prominent texts is seen as a strategy to enhance literary quality and authority of meaning (similar to quotes and references in academic writing). Throughout the Islamic world Qur'anic phrases are inserted into *duas*, and there are even compilations of such quotations for exactly this purpose.¹¹⁸

The *dua* recited by Nassir of Bakathir after the *dua* section of the *Barzanji* at the end of a performance includes one such Qur'anic quote:

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ
أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

Rabbanā hab lanā min azwājinā wa-dhuriyatīnā qurrata a'yunin wa-aj'alnā lil-muttaqīna imāmā.

[...] Our Lord, give us joy in our spouses and offspring. Make us good examples to those who are aware of You. (Qur'an 25:74)

In the Qur'an this is clearly marked as a beneficial supplication as it is framed by: 'Those who pray, 'Our Lord, give us [...] aware of you.' These servants will be rewarded with the highest place in Paradise for their steadfastness. There they will be met with greetings and peace' (Qur'an 24:74-75).

¹¹⁸ There are a number of famous collections of *dua* compiled from the Qur'an and the Hadith. Among them are Imam Ghazali's Book of the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (1990), *Dalā'il al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār fī dhikr al-ṣalāh 'alā al-nabī al-mukhtār* 'the Waymarks of Benefits and the Brilliant Burst of Sunshine in the Remembrance of Blessings on the Chosen Prophet' (1896) by Imam Muḥammad b Sulaymān al-Jazūlī (died 1464, Shādhiliya), and the more recent *Ḥiṣn al-muslim min adhkār al-kitāb wa-al-sunnah* 'The Muslim's fortress of remembrances from the Book and the Sunna' compiled by Sa'īd b 'Alī b Waif al-Qaḥṭānī (2008) which is widely available in Zanzibar in affordable pocket size.

As the insertion of *ayāt* into supplications or rather the reading of supplicative passages from the Qur'an is common, quotations are also enunciated for other purposes. Upon finishing the *dua* chapter of the *Barzanji* the *msomaji* will without pause and in the same vocal style go on to recite a Qur'anic verse that is a call to all believers to bless and pray upon the Prophet.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Inna Allaha wa-malā'ikatahu yuṣallūna 'alā al-nabī
Yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū 'alayhi wa-sallimū taslīmā.

God and His angels bless the Prophet—so, you who believe, bless him
too and give him greetings of peace. (Qur'an 33:56)

This is thus joining in an activity that is not only sanctioned by God but He Himself blesses and prays for Muhammad along with the angels. This literally Godly activity is far more than a rationale for *maulidi* readings. As the vast majority of the audience joins in with verve this is a last climax point in *maulidi*, performatively, textually and theologically (see also 3.3).

One of Tarbiya's *qasidas* transposes this idea into poetry and even mentions the source:

Kauli Rabbi iwaelezeaa	Kutoka ndani ya Qur-ani
Hakika yake na Malaika	Wanamsalia Muhammadi

*The Lord's word explains it in the Quran,
Truly He and His angels, send blessings upon Muhammad. (T9:3)*

Qur'anic inspiration is not limited to text and ideas, how it is recited is equally influential. Indeed, the word Qur'an already indicates this central aspect of reception of the Sacred Text, it means '*the reciting*' (Graham & Kermani 2008: 115). Also the written text is referred to by another word, *muṣḥaf* 'codex' which 'could never have sufficed without an accompanying mnemonic recitative tradition' (Graham & Kermani 2008: 116). The Qur'an has persisted as a living scripture because its oral-aural character is deeply connected to the notion of its inimitability or miraculous character (*i'jāz*). Therefore textual exegesis (*tafṣīr*)

required a knowledge of both *tajwīd* and the *qirā'āt*. 'The inherent sacrality of the original Arabic sounds [...] is eloquently affirmed. The sense of the holiness, or *baraka* ('blessing'), of the sounded holy text seems to penetrate into every corner of the Islamic world' (Graham & Kermani 2008: 121).

6.2 INTER-TEXTUAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER GENRES

6.2.1 Trans-local Genres

Probably the most influential source for the Swahili *qasida* composers is Arabic *qasidas* or rather *nashīd* ‘Islamic chant, vocal music’ (Shiloah 2008). Not only are many compositions from the Arabian Peninsula performed in East Africa, especially ‘Alawī poems from Yemen, but they are also reworked as Swahili adaptations or only use specific parts, i.e. refrain or melody.

The constant actualisation of these historical¹¹⁹ and migrated *qasidas* creates a peculiar atmosphere that is unlike that of contemporary Swahili compositions.

The key positions in Zanzibari *maulidis* are held by ‘Alawī compositions, i.e. the first or opening *qasida*, the one performed standing during the fourth chapter of the *Barzanji*, and the one after chapter four. *Yā Rabbi ṣallī* is the *qasida ya ufunguzi* ‘opening *qasida*’ in every *maulidi* by every group. Whoever asked about the chain of events in a *maulidi* invariably named this *qasida* as being the first in the ceremony.

Under its full title *Yā Rabbi ṣallī ‘alā Muḥammad* ‘Oh Lord, send blessing on Muhammad’ is also performed in Arabic in Yemen and Indonesia. On the Comoros, in Lamu and Mombasa the wholly Arabic version is also performed as *qasida ya ufunguzi* in two other types of *maulidi*, *Maulidi al-Habshi* and *Dayba* (Noormuhammad).

In Zanzibar it is mostly performed in its local version called *Tumwa Mkaramu* ‘The Generous Prophet’ (5.1.1) which was originally composed by Sheikh Bakathir. The stanzas are in Swahili and the refrain is in Arabic (cf. B11, K1, Z4, and T4).

The ‘Alawī nexus is also obvious in another *qasida* that is sung in Yemen, Indonesia, on the Kenyan coast, and in Zanzibar: *Bi nadhra* by ‘Abdallah b. ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād is one of the most famous and widespread ‘Alawī *qasidas* that talks about God’s

¹¹⁹ Among them is the perhaps oldest Islamic song of all *Ṭala‘a al-badru ‘alaynā* probably composed in 622 AD (Imam Ghazali – lhyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn). Moreover this *qasida* may be the oldest evidence for the recurring metonymical use of the moon for Muhammad (see chapter 4). While this *qasida* is not often performed by *maulidi* groups, popular recordings from Indonesia or the Arab world are frequently played loudly at weddings and even on the MS Kilimanjaro, a speed boat ferrying between Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam.

compassion, healing powers and other virtues (indirect advice, see chapter 4). Bakathir performed it once in Arabic (07.03.2010) The refrain is:

Alā yā Allāh bi-naḍhra mina al-ʿaīni al-raḥīmah

Tudāwī kulla mā bī mina amrāḍhi saqīmah

Is not Allah of the sight from the compassionate eye

That (sight) heals everything that is in me from the suffering illnesses.

The beginning of which *Alā yā Allāh bi-naḍhra* is recited as a chorus part at the end of each line of the stanzas. The same melody, refrain and structuring is also used by Msolopa in *Leo Tumefurahika* ‘Today we rejoice,’ the rest of the wedding *qasida* is wishing the couple well. This *qasida* is also very popular as a recording by Yemeni *munshid* ‘nashīd singer’ ʿAbdulqāder Qawzaʿ.

Another good example for a widely sung¹²⁰ *qasida* of Arabic origin is the one recited in-between chapter 4 of the *Barzanji* while standing up: *Ya Nabiyu salam alaika – Marhaba*.¹²¹ The refrain of blessings upon the Prophet is also provided as *salams* in *Diwān quṭūf ar-rabīʿ fī qaṣāʾid madḥ ṭaha al-shafīʿ*¹²² and taken on in many Indonesian *kasida*. In Bakathir’s version it is combined with Swahili stanzas from *Rabbi Mshushize Sala* ‘Lord send blessing on him’ (B9).

Ya Nabiyu salam alaika

Ya Rasuli salam alaika

Ya Habibi salam alaika

Salawatullah alaika

Oh Prophet, peace be upon you,

Oh Messenger, peace be upon you,

Oh Beloved, peace be upon you,

God’s blessings be upon you.

Rabbi mshushize sala Mtume na wake ala

Na sahabaze jumla Na salamu zikishuka

Lord send blessings upon the Prophet and his relatives

And all his companions And Peace be upon them

¹²⁰ A version with Urdu stanzas and Arabic refrain of the *Ya nabī salam ʿalaika* part is available by Indian (Bollywood) singer Mohammed Rafi on the Album *Hamd Naat Qawwali*.

¹²¹ The transcription reflects the Swahilised pronunciation of Arabic.

¹²² The Harvest of Rabīʿ al-Awwal in the Hymns in Praise of Taahaa the Intercessor (cited after: Noormuhammad). Ibrahim personally and Madrasat al-Nour own copies.

The remainder of the stanzas are general *dua* (see appendix) as this is a powerful time for supplications, in the same way in which specific positions during *salah* are deemed to result in more effective *dua*.

The second part *Marḥabā* is a versatile standing ovation *qasida*. While it has often been included in printed publications of the *Mawlid Barzanji*, one also finds it alongside two other *Mawlid* texts (cf. 3.1), namely the *Sharaf al-Anām* ‘Noblest of Beings’ composed by Shaykh Aḥmad b Qāsim and the *maulidi* Debei, named after its author ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b ‘Alī b al-Dayba’ (Noormuhammad). Furthermore it is recited during *Qasidat al-Burda*¹²³ readings.

Marḥabā marḥabā yā nūru ‘aīnī
 Marḥabā marḥabā ḡadd al-ḥussaīni
Welcome welcome, oh Light of my eyes,
Welcome, welcome, grandfather of Hussein.

Another of these Arabic classics that are popular on the Swahili coast as well as other parts of the Islamic world, including Indonesia, South Asia, and the Middle East,¹²⁴ is *Yā Rabbī bi-l-muṣṭafā*, which is in Zanzibar associated with the Qādiriya but was also performed by Bakathir on request at a private *Maulidi ya Mtume* with an Indian Sunni family at Maisara (26.02.2010) and Mtendeni at a special *dua* and *qasida* sessions on the night before leaving for Morocco (02.06.2010).

Yā Rabbī bi-l-Muṣṭafā
 Balligh maqāsidanā
 Wa-aghfir lanā mā māḍa
 Yā Wāsi‘ al-karami
O my Lord! with the Elect One
Make us attain our goals,
And forgive us for what has passed,
O Most Munificent One!

In many instances the fourth chapter of the *Barzanji* is recited in Swahili instead of Arabic to allow the audience a better understanding of this climactic point in *maulidi*. A full analysis of the poem that shows how the Swahili poems transposes

¹²³ Although today the *Burda* is no longer performed in Zanzibar it is on the Kenyan coast and other parts of the Muslim world.

¹²⁴ It has become one of the Modern classics with versions by many of the internationally famous *munshids*, e.g. Yusuf Islam and Zain Bhika.

its Arabic model was presented in 5.2.2. *Mlango wa Nne* is *the* prime example for a Zanzibari *qasida* adaptation of a high-status Arabic model, and a prose text converted to poetry. The relative understanding and beauty is finely balanced in this example: The reduced sacrality of Swahili is compensated by a greater degree of understanding and the poetic form, which is considered the more exquisite than prose in Swahili.

6.2.2 Local Genres

Local genres are also sources for inspiration and allusions to *qasida* composers. However, most of the inter-textual phenomena one finds between *qasida* and other local genres are ‘accidental associations’ (Irwin 2001). Some of these accidental associations are frowned upon, especially musical transpositions are considered not suitable for the context of *qasida*. This concerns rhythms as well as melodic themes.¹²⁵

Bakathir performs an extensive version of *Oa*, the poem presented in chapter 5.1.2, composed by Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy (see below authorship), which stands in a long tradition of Swahili verse.¹²⁶ The composition attributed by Bakathir’s tradition to the Zanzibari Sheikh resembles the most probably older version titled *Owa*¹²⁷ by Ahmed Nassir Bhalo (1971: 158-159) a poet from Mombasa, Kenya. It could well be that both derive from a common antecedent as the two texts include passages that are almost identical, varying only slightly:

Owa ‘sandame hadaa	moyo ukahadaiwa
Owa anayekufaa	mke mwenye kusifiwa
Owa upate kuzaa	kama ulivyozaliwa
Owa ukijaaliwa	mupendane na mkeo ¹²⁸ (Bhalo, stanza 1)

¹²⁵ Pers. Comm. Ustadh Mohamed, Ibrahim Bakar Salum, Salma Salim Abdallah, all various occasions, without being asked. See also above 6.1.

¹²⁶ This tradition is continued today. Omar Babu, a poet and scholar of Mombasan origin, posted his version on his facebook profile on 28.05.2010. As a refrain his poem remarks:
Owa kuowa si kazi kazi kuilinda ndowa!
 ‘Marry, to marry requires no effort, the effort is in guarding the marriage.’

¹²⁷ A full text is included in the appendix.

¹²⁸ Slightly adapted spelling.

*Marry do not follow deception, that the heart may be deceived,
Marry who suits you, a woman who is praised,
Marry to bear/beget children, like you were born,
Marry if you are granted, love one another, you and your wife.*

Oa uwache hadaa	Ya moyo kuhadaiwa
Oa atakaefaa	Mke anaesifiwa
Oa upate kuzaa	Kama ulivyojaliwa
Oa utabarikiwa	Upendane na mkeo (al-Farsy, stanza 1)

*Marry to leave behind deception, of the heart to be deceived,
Marry who will suit you, a woman who is praised,
Marry to bear/beget children, like you were born,
Marry and you will be blessed, love one another, you and your wife.*

...while others offer an alternative wording of the same or similar idea (the respective third stanzas):

Owa moyo wa imani	usozumbua mafuja
Owa isowe duni	anayeitwa kioja
Owa mtenda ya dini	ndiye mke mwenye haja
Owa utungiwe koja	mupendane na mkeo (Bhalo)

*Marry a heart of faith, that does not explore confusions
Marry, do not marry an inferior (woman), who is called an oddity,
Marry a religious person, she is indeed the one who has (your) needs.
Marry so that you may be strung a bead necklace, love each other with your wife.*

Oa mke wa Omani	Asoleta ya kufuja
Oa usioe duni	Anaeitwa kiroja
Oa alo na imani	Utakidhi yako haja
Oa kheri itakuja	Upendane na mkeo (al-Farsy)

*Marry a woman from Oman, who will not bring disturbance/uproar,
Marry, do not marry an inferior (woman), who is called an oddity,
Marry someone with faith, you will be granted your needs,
Marry and happiness will come, love one another, you and your wife.*

...while some bear no similarity with any stanza in the other poem. An example for this is Bhalo's last stanza but one:

Owa chenye asmini	kikuba cha asiliya
Owa kilo na rihani	na waridi maridhiya
Owa kilicho na shani	na manukato kutiya
Owa ujuwe duniya	mupendane na mkeo.

*Marry, of jasmine, a traditional kikuba¹²⁹,
 Marry, one of scents, and pleasing¹³⁰ roses,
 Marry, one of exquisiteness, and perfumes,
 Marry so that you may know the world/earthly life, love each other with your
 wife.*

Although the metaphorical use of scents is common in Zanzibari *qasida* this stanza has no equivalent in Farsy's version.

The interesting question here is whether Bhalo's composition is a *qasida* or just a *shairi*. It could be both: as it is published in a book it is a *shairi*. As all Swahili poetry Bhalo's poem is meant to be sung. Whatever the author's intentions for a performance of it are, they are poems and thus incomplete without it. In other words, all *qasidas* are *mashairi* and only in the context that specifically names them as *qasida* or indeed through the performance context they become *qasidas*. Nevertheless, content matter and formal features do play a role in the assignment of a genre label, the determining factor is the type of performance and who performs them.

Thus, the demarcation lines between genres are sometimes blurred. But even when this is not the case, when the distinction between two styles is obvious, as the following example with texts from *qasida* and *mchiriku*¹³¹ show, there can be similarities on the textual level.

The next chapter will look closer at the genres of *qasida* and *Bongo Flava*, not only at intertextual phenomena between the two. One reason for these phenomena is the fact that current critical social issues are communicated through various media, not just the press but also literary texts.

One topic that is specific to Tanzania is the killing of albinos in recent years. A number of artists of popular song genres have engaged in the discourse on this distressing subject. In their song *Mauaji ya Maalbino* 'The killing of Albinos' the

¹²⁹ A *kikuba* is a packet of flowers and aromatic herbs worn in the hair on dress.

¹³⁰ *Maridhiya* can also mean 'modest person.'

¹³¹ *Mchiriku* is an urban musical style that emerged in the 1990s. It synthesises sped up Zaramo *ngoma* rhythms with a small vintage Casio keyboard and poignant lyrics on survival in the deprived urban neighbourhoods where the residents face unemployment, oppressive relatives, Aids and unfaithful partners, drugs and alcohol (Graebner 2011).

group Jagwa Music from Dar es Salaam who play *mchiriku* comment on the 'killing and slaughtering of albino people, for selfish and pecuniary reasons' (Graebner 2011).

Jagwa tunalalama vitendo vya kikatili vinavyotendewa wale maalbino
 Jagwa tunalalama sana vitendo vya katili vinavyotendewa wale Walemavu wa ngozi
 Watanazania wote tushirikiane tupige vita vitendo vya kikatili
 Marubino
 Wamekosa nini
 Mimi namsema: eti kwa nini?
 Nikifikiria hakiingii akilini
 Jana kweupe
 Unamshika mkono unamkata
 Ukiuliza hela hizo hela gani ya kuwaweka wenzenu mashakani
 Mtoto wake wa kumzaa unamnyakua
 Bila huruma waenda kumua
 Dunia sasa inaenda mwisho haya yote sababu ya matatizo
 Wewe kwa nini unashindwa kujikata mwenyewe
 Kuna Wengine wanauliwa
 Kuna Wengine wananyongwa
 Kuna Wengine wanachinjwa
 Yote kwa sababu ya ushindani
 Yote kwa sababu ya ufisadi

*We, Jagwa, cry out about the murderous acts that are done to albinos,
 We Cry out loudly about the murderous acts that are done to the disabled of skin,
 All Tanzanian, let us unite to wage war on these murderous acts,
 Albinos,
 What is their mistake?
 I say about him/her: Why?
 When I think about it it is inconceivable (lit. It does not enter the mind)
 Yesterday at dawn
 You take his/her hand and cut it off him/her.
 When you are asked about money, what kind of money is it that puts your
 next in trouble?
 His own child you snatch away from him.
 Without mercy you go to kill him/her.
 The world now comes to an end, all that because of problems.
 Why do you fail to cut yourself?
 Others are being killed,
 Others are being throttled,
 Others are being slaughtered.
 All that because of rivalry
 All that because of malice/immorality. (O1)*

While the *qasida* titled *Vifo vya Albino* ‘The deaths of Albinos’ by *Madrasatul Ghazal Islamiya* (see 5.3.4 for the full text and an extensive analysis) is considerably less graphic and the music less aggressive – the video clip’s aesthetic that is modelled on its Indonesian prototypes with children in matching shiny clothing and no theatrical representation of what is said – what is expressed is essentially the same: that it is despicable to kill albinos and that the primary motivations for people to do so are financial. Both stress that the albinos themselves are without fault. Also both texts call on a communal effort to condemn the killings. And they interpret the viciousness of these crimes as only one of many symptoms of a general immorality. This is a dramatic instance of artists articulating pressing issues on behalf of society at large, which is expressed in the widely used *Msanii ni kioo cha jamii*. ‘An artist is the mirror of society.’ This in turn ties in back with the role – and obligation – of the poet as voicing a common sentiment (Abdulaziz 1979: 66). Deeply embedded in this role albeit not as individuals but as a community of Muslims *qasida* asserts this role through the communal ‘we’ whereas *mchiriku* or *Bongo Flava* artists speak as individuals to society (see also 4.4.2 and 7.3).

6.3 INTER-TEXTUAL RELATIONS WITHIN *QASIDA*

6.3.1 Within Groups and Among Groups

The most idiosyncratic Zanzibari *qasida* formula is the two lines of opening originally used by Sheikh Bakathir whose compositions often begin with this poetic statement:¹³²

Leo tumefurahika	Watu wote kwa yakini
Nyoyo zimetukunjuka	Furaha iso kifani

*Today we are happy, all people truly are,
The hearts are merry, with incomparable joy.*

Owing to the large quantity of *qasidas* composed by Sheikh Bakathir,¹³³ the fact that quite a few of them continue to be sung in the present day, combined with his authority as a scholar and teacher at Sunni Memon Madrasa and Miskiti Gibreel, Gofu and Barza, and principal of Madrasat al-Nour, his style has often been replicated. Whether these resemblances are conscious allusions in reverence to him or, which is more likely, occur due to the fact that his compositions are so prolific, is not clear. Nevertheless his formulations have become integrated with the conventional Zanzibari *qasida* diction. His standard opening is today a current formula.

One example is the occasional *qasida Mahari* 'Bride Wealth' composed by *Ukhti* 'Sister' Saada Mohamed (B20).

Leo tumefurahika	Watu wote kwa yakini
Nyoyo zimetukunjuka	Furaha iso kifani
Kwa Mahari kutufika	Sote tumo furahani
Mahari yawe ya kheri	Ya Salama na Amani

*Today we are happy, truly all people are,
Our hearts are elated with incomparable happiness,
As the dowry has reached us, we are in happiness,
May the dowry be of luck, of peace and good faith.*

¹³² This is another important reason for the selection of the title.

¹³³ This Sheikh Bakathir (died 2000), is the grandson of the Sheikh Abdallah b Muhammad Bakathir (1860-1925) who first came to Zanzibar in early 1890, (cf. chapters 2 and 3.1). And the son of Abubakar Bakathir (1881-1943). Loimeier calls him Mu'allim Bakathir (2009: 514-516).

Thus, the three Bakathir generations were not only instrumental in the transformation of *maulidi* celebrations (cf. 3.1) at the start of the century but also in the creation of a distinctly Zanzibari *qasida* language (cf. chapter 4) from the late 1960s onwards.

As stated above, the citing of earlier works is not only common but also not to be considered a blemish or incapacity of the author, rather the insertion of quotes from prominent texts is seen as a strategy to enhance literary quality and authority of meaning.

Bakathir's *Ewe Mukhubiri* 'Oh bearer of Good News' (B21: 5-8):

Ulipochozo mwezi	Wa kheri
Zikashikamana	Zote kamari
Sijamuonapo	Mtu Mzuri
Uso wa Furaha	Kama Hashima

*When the moon of good fortune appeared,
All the stars held on to each other,
I have not seen a beautiful human,
A blissful face, like that of the Honourable.*

Is quoted but altered significantly in a *Maulidi ya Homu* tessera:

Ulipashuzile mwezi zahiri
Zikashikamana zote kamari
Sijamuanapo mtu mzuri zaidi
Ya Mtume
Uso wa furaha kama hashima

*The moon split visibly
And the stars held on to each other
I have not seen anyone more beautiful than
The Prophet
A blissful face like that of the Honourable*

Being the oldest evidence for the recurring metonymical use of the moon for Muhammad (see also chapter 4.1.1), the above mentioned *Ṭalaʿa al-badru ʿalaynā* which was probably composed in 622 AD (Imam Ghazali – *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*), is also almost certainly the source of Bakathir's lines while the *Homu* stanza refers to another incident that is believed to be the *sabab al-nuzūl* 'context of revelation' as in the following verses from *surat al-qamar*:

‘The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two. Whenever the disbelievers see a sign, they turn away and say, “Same old sorcery!”’ (Qur’an 54: 1-2)

The rising of the moon as a theme is also used in the *taarab* song *Unapochomoza Mwezi* ‘When the moon rises’¹³⁴ which according to Khamis adds to ‘the mystical or luminous beauty of the moon, [...] the concept of distance, alienation and implied kinaesthetic effect. It is a poem of wishful thinking in which the poet craves for almost the impossible – though, at the same time, the audience realises that what the poet wants is not beyond his reach – after all, he is, by implication, talking not of a spatial separation, but a psychological one, between himself and a lady he loves who seems, for now, unreachable’ (2004: 35).

6.3.2 Composers and Authorship

As indicated above, one of the reasons for not using the term intertextuality are its implications on notions of authorship. This chapter has sought to show how, just like any other genre, intertextual phenomena are ubiquitous in *qasida*, some of them intended allusions or quotation, some accidental. While Foucault’s (1969) statement that authorship was assigned in culture-specific ways certainly holds true, his conception of ‘death of the author,’ that the author was a mere vehicle for letting language reveal itself, is exaggerated. A more balanced approach should neither downplay the importance of composers, nor underestimate the role of audiences in the construction of meaning. Especially for oral literature, where there are additional factors in play – composers, performers, audiences, and contexts – a spectrum model similar to Foley’s propositions on genre (2002: 39; see 1.4.1) could provide a more adequate reflection of the complexities of interplay.

Again, the local discourse provides an interesting representation of authorship. The Tarbiya founders express a strikingly similar idea: *Qasida zipo kwenye jamii* ‘Qasida are there in society.’¹³⁵ They only need to arrange the words into poems. This in turn ties in well with the role of the poet in Swahili society as described by

¹³⁴ The lyrics were composed in 1979 by Hemed Said El-Buhry, the music by Ally Salim. The songs was performed by Ikhwani Safaa with the singer Seif Salum Abdallah.

¹³⁵ Informal conversation with the principals of Tarbiya, 30.08.2008.

Abdulaziz: '[...] the work of the poet is to express the common feeling and humour in the best idiom his skill can devise' (1979: 66). Foucault's (1969) idea thus suits the Swahili situation: where authorship is experienced as being collective and the authors do not recall which parts are their own contribution no mention is made of an author. The same applies to older *qasida* and ones that have been appropriated from other groups. The very fact that this is easily done (and mostly without complaints from the original composers) reveals the relatively modest role of the individual.

Barber expresses thoughts similar to Foucault's but more specifically also for the oral context when she talks about entextualisation: '[E]ntextualisation [...] is not confined to making a single, bounded text "object-like." Rather what has been achieved is an entire field or network of textualities which has the properties of "out-there-ness," a network of formulations that exist in the world prior to the utterance of a speaker or the exegesis of an interpreter' (2007: 100). This notion of text again emphasises their social embeddedness, which includes the author's and the audience's previous experiences that come to bear on the composition and its exegesis respectively.

Texts and their exegesis can transcend the authorial intentions, especially when they are transposed into new contexts. However, one should not underestimate the role of the author. Even though I agree with Barber that many works of oral literature are 'composed from elements created and modified by numerous people', her claim that these are 'assembled by performers who may function more as catalysts than as creators' (2007:101) seems an oversimplified view.

Unquestionably, in the case of *qasida*, the vast majority of performers do fit into her description. However, others who use the very same bricolage and mosaic technique in composition and performance do so intentionally to make socially sensitive statements in an acceptable way. As they tend to be youths or young adults this is a bottom-up conversation for which they deliberately employ conventional styles to offer their opinions indirectly and subtly. The very choice of the genre is telling here. Other versions of this technique that has been described above is the inclusion of innovative elements in one or two of the many features of

qasida. Precisely, the indirectness and subtlety makes their messages effective.¹³⁶ The rise of *qasida* as a genre in recent years confirms the relevance of their contributions to current social discourses, complemented by other indirect and direct musical and literary modes of expression.

Theories of intertextuality have clearly been a fruitful challenge to received 18th and 19th century ideas of the author as genius who creates an artwork out of the void. A tempered approach that takes into account some aspects of both views seems better suited to the context of *qasida*.

Barber's description of texts as existing within and 'constructing vast networks of linked and mutually suggestive formulations, creating forms that others can recognise, appropriate and inhabit' (2007: 101) is very apt and suits the nature of *qasida* well, as we have seen above. On the other hand, the composers are often remembered and sometimes there are stories of the context of a particular song's composition in the groups that originally performed them. Furthermore, not only the groups as a whole have a distinct way of performance but also an individual style of composition is noticeable in the texts. The example of Sheikh Bakathir's influential opening that has become a formula has been discussed extensively.

The composers of the Arabic staple *qasidas* are often anonymous in the local context, most older Swahili *qasidas* are attributed to important scholars such as Sheikh Bakathir or Saleh Abdallah Farsy. Sometimes the occasion of composition is still remembered, for example the famous *Oa* was composed by Farsy for his son's wedding. It has to be remembered that these facts are unknown to the vast majority of audiences and indeed performers. Joint authorship, where two or three or even more people co-author a *qasida* is common, as is anonymous or rather forgotten, not attributed authorship. Similar to other genres, the number of female composers is very small. Partly, this is because women tend to compose much less than men. Another reason is that poems composed by women are sometimes 'given' to a male relative, i.e. he takes the credit for her poem.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Maybe the ultimate example of indirect critique is the 1984 song *Candidat na biso Mobutu* 'Our candidate Mobutu' by Franco (Luambo Makiadi & Tout-Puissant 1984). Commissioned by Mobutu Sese Seko for the upcoming elections, Franco composed a praise song on the dictator: it was published on both sides of the record, an ingenious way of articulating his critique of the only candidate.

¹³⁷ Pers. comm. Jasmin Mahazi, December 2004.

In the local discourse, the assignment of authorship comes in many forms. All three, composers, performers, and audiences alike are heterogeneous. They have different backgrounds, different education, and interests. For example, Ibrahim will probably not know the composer of each and every *qasida* if asked, but he did write the authors down in his *buku* that he copied from Sheikh Bakathir. Of some *qasidas* he will know the author as well as the occasion. Hamad from the Qādiriyya ya Amani only remembers his own compositions, all others are *za zamani* ‘of the old days.’ With the troupe from Mfereji wa Wima the communal authorship blurs the boundaries between the three or four individual authors but they are very sure about which are their ‘own’ *qasidas* and which are again ‘old and traditional’ ones. For performers and audiences more so for those who are interested in the ‘scene’ or who attend *maulidis* more often, but even ‘your average Zanzibari on the street’ will at least be able to tell which group performs a certain *qasida* and how (especially when the recordings are well known), or at the very least if its origin is ‘Alawī (in this context called ‘Bakathir’ as the *madrasa* is metonymically used in Zanzibar for this *tariqa*), or Qādirī, or *Maulidi ya Homu*, or a shared traditional *qasida*.

However much anyone knows about the composition of a certain *qasida*, all Zanzibaris would agree that sometime someone sat down and composed the *qasida*.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

Texts are the means by which people say things (about experience, society, the past, other people) and do things (affirm their existence, build and dismantle reputations, make demands, imagine communities, convene publics). And texts also *are* things – by which I mean that they are social and historical facts whose form, transformation and dispersal can be studied empirically.
(Barber 2007:200)

In this chapter we have looked at texts as social and historical facts and their trajectories.

Qasida is an art form that comes in multiples. By multiples here I mean many things: the repetition within one *qasida*, or one performance, or one group, or across groups, and indeed the multiplicity of *maulidi* as a ritual performance with the rigid internal structuring. Moreover I mean the landscape of quotations that is created through the reoccurrence of textual and performative tesserae in a specific order repeatedly, albeit with slight variations. This results in the notion of *qasida* held by performers and audiences being at once fortified and transformed ever so slightly with each new occurrence.

Authorship is culturally assigned, however, this does not mean the author is a mere catalyst of language or textual forms that exist autonomously. Language and texts do not exist without humans. Humans create and employ them. They learn a range of linguistic and literary skills from their contexts. However, they are capable of expressing their experiences and feelings in literary ways that are original. A theory that claims the existence of a text, independent and autonomous texts of Zanzibari composers and performers, understates the expressive capacities and creative practices of individuals and groups.

In short, the existence of intertextual phenomena does not necessarily lead to the conclusions that authors do not exist or are not important.

Local notions of authorship can be revealing aspects of genre and cultural production in general. For Zanzibari *qasida* authorship exists in a continuum of recognition. Similar to Foley's thoughts the four categories along the written and oral continuum, authorship attribution seems to exist in a number of categories as nodes on spectrum. In the context of *qasida*, most authors are recorded in the

written versions of the group leaders' books. However, to the younger performers and audiences authorship in the sense of composers is largely irrelevant. Recognised are certain musical styles and popular new compositions that are associated with a specific group through their presence at *maulidis* and in the media.

Therefore, I argue that firstly, composers do exist, they shape their compositions as original artworks by reworking conventions and new elements in various ways. Secondly, these artworks are re-presented in various ways by *maulidi* groups, the performers communally shaping the appearance and effect of the artwork and thus interpreting it at the same time. Thirdly, the audiences receive these artworks, participate in their performances and shape the scene by favouring groups for their *maulidi* and the purchase of records.

Composers and performers are involved in mediating this artwork that exists within a network of artworks in a diverse range of intertextual relationships with a diverse range of genres and performative practices, both diachronically and synchronically. There is a creative or productive interaction between persons, be it individual or groups, and already existing texts and genres in *qasida*. Appropriation is common but restricted to exclude other local genres but allows *qasida* and far removed texts.

The complex nature of authorship is well expressed in Eichendorff's 1835 (first published 1838) poem Wünschelrute 'Divining Rod' (1987):¹³⁸

Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen,
Die da träumen fort und fort,
Und die Welt hebt an zu singen,
Triffst du nur das Zauberwort.

He balances the notions of songs (or poems or indeed literature in general) already existing everywhere, but it will not resound with everyone unless 'you' a very specific person do something that is not ultimately explicable, it's magical.

As Boon (1986:241) explains, a received notion of work considered it to be a 'fragment of substance' and was therefore explained by situating it in a process of

¹³⁸ 'Sleeps a song in things abounding,
That keep dreaming to be heard,
Earth's tunes will start resounding,
If you find the magic word.'

filiation and acknowledging the author as proprietor of his or her own work. 'Barthes radically opposed to this exercise the interpretive reading of a text, "itself being the text-between of another text" (1977:160). [...] Or, to couch the matter in an interrupted aphorism: A text's unity lies not in its origin (traced along a filiation) but in its destination' (Boon 1986:241). Such an approach opens up texts, here *qasidas*, to a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations and shifts the focus from its origins to opportunities.

The next chapter will look at new opportunities, destinations and contexts for *qasida*.

Chapter Seven

***Qasida* in the Urban Landscape**



This last chapter explores the ubiquity of *qasida* in the everyday life of urban Zanzibaris and especially the relation of *qasida* and the media. It includes a discussion of the transformations caused by the production of commercial recordings and new media technologies such as music videos and mobile phones. Lastly it explores *qasida* both as an alternative to, and coexisting alongside, other forms of popular culture. In particular it focuses on *Bongo Flava*, a broad category that includes ‘many internationally popular genres of music, such as rap, zouk, and r&b’ (Perullo 2011:363).

Qasidas have had a central place in the lives of Zanzibaris for at least a century, through Islamic education, as described in chapter two, or through festive events as set out in chapter three. The *qasida* lyrics discussed in chapters 4 and 5 are both a reflection of, and a factor in, the outlook of Zanzibari society. Their poetic and musical forms are familiar to everyone from early childhood and are thus key in understanding both creativity and reception of all other poetic and musical genres. However, unlike other genres such as *taarab*, *qasida* was not prominent in everyday life, nor was it perceived as entertainment, until recently. On our second meeting Yunus Sameja admitted that he had at first thought my topic rather boring and limited but the longer he was thinking about it the more he had realised how it was everywhere around him and had been so all his life. He realised that he was so used to hearing it that he simply took it for granted (pers. comm. August 2009).

In recent years, *qasida's* relationship to the mainstream has changed drastically. One important element is the socio-political changes since the beginning of the 1990s (these were outlined as factors in the rise of the genre in the introduction). Another important element of this change is the ensuing repositioning of Islamic education, and Islam in general, in the public sphere (chapter 2). The popularity of *qasida*, however, is also to do with the availability of recordings and their consumption (on a large scale since about 2008). This applies to recordings from Indonesia, the Arabian Peninsula and subsequently to those made locally as well. The ubiquity of mobile phones has also played a major role in popularising *qasida* as a genre. *Qasida* can now be replayed in another time and place (and most likely to

another audience) on a day to day recreational basis as opposed to being exclusively experienced in the original setting of a live performance for a specific event. Mobiles are used as music players and religious poetry is sent in text messages.

Barber succinctly draws out the connection between social change and creativity in literature:

‘People embroiled in rapid, fundamental social change turned to the creation of extraordinarily innovative and elaborate written texts to stabilise and at the same time edit collective memory [...], or firm up the outlines of a persona [...]. New ways of imagining sociality and public space were pioneered through the emphatic simultaneous projection of texts into print, radio, television, records, audiocassettes and live performance by people [...], reinscribing their mark in multiple modes as public space expanded.’ (2007: 201)

As she argues, in the process of mutual impact between social-change and technological developments, literature and other expressive modes play a crucial role in shaping the identities of individuals and collective imaginations.

At the same time, according to Appadurai,

‘[...] ethnography must redefine itself as that practice of representation that illuminates the power of large-scale imagined life possibilities over specific life trajectories. This is thickness with a difference, and the difference lies in a new alertness to the fact that ordinary lives today are more often powered not by the givenness of things but by the possibilities that media (either directly or indirectly) suggest are available.’ (1996: 55)

If we combine the two approaches, it emerges that people not merely consume media but rather engage in an active relationship creating and deriving powerful visions. An attentiveness to this interplay as manifest in contemporary *qasida* thus illustrates the passion and ingenuity of urban Zanzibaris.

7.1 RECORDING

Since the late 19th century, recording technology has considerably altered the way music is produced and perceived worldwide. Its effects are both economic and aesthetic. Whereas before the emergence of recordings, music was ephemeral and only conveyed at live performances, recordings fix music, mediate consumption, make it portable and repeatable. Over time, these new qualities have reshaped conceptions of music. It has moved from being a process to being an object, a commodity (Graebner 2004: 171).

In the context of *qasida*, in addition to these general transformations, the recent emergence and popularity of commercial recordings has had a profound impact on perceptions of the genre by the fact that *qasida* recordings are sold alongside other musical styles. They look just the same too: simple biro drawings or cut-out photos that are photocopied on coloured paper. As the *taarab* or *muziki wa dansi* recordings also on sale, these *qasida* CDs are music that is to be enjoyed and listened to by individuals in a home-setting as well.



Plate 7.01 Covers of six *qasida* CDs, from simple to more elaborate. All photocopied in b/w on coloured paper.

In East Africa, the earliest commercial recordings were of *taarab*, and they started to appear in the early decades of the 20th century. The process of standardisation and incorporation of international influences was slow at first. But with the introduction of sound film and radio in the 1940s, they become more pervasive, and East Africa really is 'in tune' with the rest of the world. From the early 1990s, the economic and political changes in Tanzania again transform the production and consumption of music with the introduction of private radio and TV stations, satellite TV, and video-clip production (Graebner 2004: 190-191). This new media landscape has in the case of *taarab* resulted in a 'stylistic departure from the received form of *taarab*' (Graebner 2004: 190) to a new form called *modern taarab* or *mipasho* 'backbiting.' *Modern taarab* groups make their own recordings and sell the 'master to [...] shops for marketing and distribution. Videos are also produced, both as song clips and as performance recordings' (Graebner 2004: 190).

The promotion of these recordings is controlled by a few large companies (based in Dar es Salaam) that own sound equipment, magazines, and radio stations.¹³⁹ Their monopoly has allowed them to control which artists are recorded and promoted (pers. comm. Werner Graebner March 2012). The same applies to artists in other musical styles. *Bongo Flava* artists usually pay a studio that records their voice and adds sampled music to it. In a second step, a music video is produced.¹⁴⁰ Only very few artists sign lucrative contracts with distributors (Perullo 2011: 339).

Piracy is another factor that influences the success and income of artists. The cost of technology to duplicate music is declining, little expertise is needed to do it, and there is a lack of awareness and investment in the enforcement of copyright laws. And technological opportunities may mean the laws are unenforceable, regardless of investment. 'Royalties are not lucrative even for highly prolific and popular composers' (Perullo 2011: 141). Pirated copies of all kinds of music are the norm rather than the exception. For the small businesses duplicating recordings and

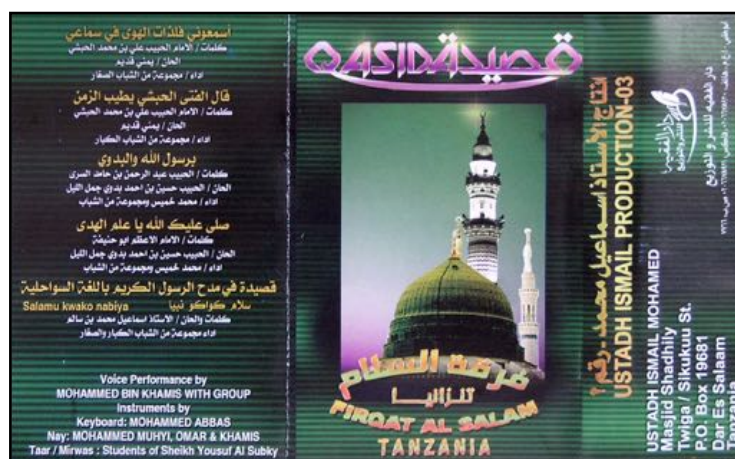
¹³⁹ 'The largest promotion company is called PrimeTime Promotions, an affiliate of Clouds FM radio station, which can advertise for free on their radio station, have musicians guaranteed to show up (particularly if they want their music played on the radio station), and get sponsors who want their products promoted at the concert and on radio. In other words, Clouds Entertainment removes advertising expenses' (Perullo 2011: 184).

¹⁴⁰ The vast majority of these videos are directed by Adam Juma of Next Level, which is also part of the PrimeTime Promotions corporation.

putting together personal mix-tapes the potential for profits is considerable. Which is why Perullo calls it the 'simplest and most effective creative practice currently taking place in the music economy.' (2011: 339)

Although at first piracy assisted the commercialisation of music in Tanzania, Perullo fears that in the future it could undermine the music economy. With concerts returning as the most important source of income, where 'recorded music could become a form of publicity for getting people to buy other merchandise (shirts, posters, and so on) and attend concerts.' (2011: 339) His vision for the future is already the reality for many artists, who earn very little from their recordings and in most cases they even spend more than they profit from the sales. Although, recordings are commercially available, the artists see them as a marketing strategy which will help them obtain more live performances. This situation is why *Bongo Flava* artists often come from upper middle class backgrounds who can afford the investment into quality recordings (pers. comm. Graebner April 2012).

The conditions in the music industry, and the lack of safety nets for artists, in Tanzania, is the reason for the high turnover of repertoire and artists in popular music in general (Perullo 2011: 141). In urban Zanzibar, though operating within the same framework, *qasida* groups have some clear advantages. They are a group rather than a single artist and they are already established as performers for *maulidis*. Their income from performances enables them to fund instruments and recording. Although they also wish to be commercially successful and famous, to them the prestige of simply being recorded, the promotion for their group and the chance to perform more and farther away are all important reasons for the investment. In addition to that, getting the message 'out there' is another strong motivation (see also 2.5 and 3.3). This might be partly due to the very recent emergence of local *qasida* recordings.



Plates 7.02 and 7.03 Cassette (below) and cover (above) of one of the first *qasida* recordings commercially available: Firqat al-Salam from Dar es Salaam, 2006.



One reason why *qasida* was not recorded commercially in Zanzibar until about 2008, may be the strong government control over all matters, including culture, music, and religion, in the post-independence period (see also 2.5). In addition to that, *qasida* had a different social place compared to other musical genres, as at that time it was only performed during *maulidi* that was then not part of the wedding entertainment. A few recordings of live performances were made by the government Radio and TV stations in Zanzibar, then the only ones existing.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Recording from the 1970s exist at their archives in Betamax format. However, the Beta-VCR is not working. The VHS tapes from the 1980s and early 1990s are mostly affected by fungus and thus have to be considered as lost (pers. comm. anonymous TVZ employee, May 2010). A small collection of audio recordings at EACROTANAL were supposed to be conserved and stored at the National Archives in circa 2000 but were found to have been eaten by bugs (pers. comm. Prof. Abdul Sheriff, July 2009).

From the monopoly of one government station the situation has changed to a vast variety of broadcasting networks today whose diversity of content reflects the diversity of interests. And even within the same genre, music has 'multiple meanings and interpretations depending on the perspectives and contexts of those who are listening' (Perullo 2011: 238).

The internal diversity of *qasida* styles described especially in chapters 3 and 4 could in this context be seen as two ends of a spectrum with the traditional *dufu*-style live performance on one end and the keyboard-drum machine-style music video that is broadcast on a private television channel, or as a ringtone on a mobile phone. In other words, over the last few years *qasida* has reinvented itself as 'disco al-Nabi' (pers. comm. Ridder Samsom, May 2009).

A similar development has taken place with *muziki wa dansi*, a genre of Congolese inspired dance music whose texts include love songs but mainly revolve around social matters such as poverty or alcoholism. Since the 1990s *muziki wa dansi*, albeit still being played, has been replaced by *Bongo Flava* (pers. comm. Werner Graebner, December 2009).

As for *qasida*, one could speculate that with time the more traditional and the more modern forms become more distinct and eventually split into two separate genres. It could be that the traditional *dufu*-style found at live performances will disappear in favour of the much cheaper option of playing recordings at *maulidis*. As a matter of fact, before the group starts and after they have finished this is already the case. This was the case for another wedding celebration, the *taarab*: Instead of having a big *taarab* orchestra play live at the occasion, the much more affordable *modern taarab* with only half a dozen members and heavily electrified became widespread practice, again in the 1990s. *Modern taarab* was and is still popular also for their much blunter texts (Beez 2003). For this reason the style became known as *mipasho* 'backbiting' or *rusha roho* 'provocation' (lit. 'throwing of the soul'). This last also gave its name to the celebrations that had no group at all but where instead the tapes were played and danced to. Although this style still exists it has long passed its peak. Something similar might happen to *qasida*. The modern type could become a semi-autonomous genre, with marked differences, musically, textually, and especially concerning the context of performance. Alongside, the traditional acoustic style might persist because *qasida* is so deeply rooted in the life of every

Zanzibari, because as a live performance it is associated with important life-cycle events, and because it is capable of transforming itself while keeping the core.



Plates 7.04 and 7.05 Recording 'The Moon has Risen' (Mtendeni 2012), 04.03.2011.



7.2 MEDIA

Listening to *qasidas* on the radio or TV, on CDs or mobile phones is a common pastime for most youth in Zanzibar. Since the preliminary fieldwork in summer 2008 and the beginning of the main fieldwork not even a year later, the number of available recordings had literally exploded, and so had the distribution among especially young people, but also adults. The small carts, called *trela la baiskeli* ‘bicycle trailers,’ that sell (pirated) music around the market areas advertise their goods by loudly playing *qasida*, *taarab*, and *muziki wa dansi*.



Plate 7.06 Cart seller at Darajani, April 2012. Photo by Abubakar Mikidad.

Recordings also resound deafeningly at weddings before the group begins the *maulidi* and after they leave for the entry of the bride.

Taking everything into account, the recording of *qasidas* and the distribution of audio content through CDs and radio had a profound impact not only on modes of consumption but also on the genre itself and perceptions of it.

Qasida in two other media, namely video and mobile phones, are presented in detail below.

7.2.1 Video

Accompanying the *qasidas* there are increasingly videos that support the music.¹⁴²

It is noteworthy that *maulidis* and other private (wedding) celebrations have been filmed since the introduction of VHS, albeit not so much to document the performance itself but the audience. This continues today. In addition, ZCTV broadcasts the *maulidi ya mitaa* live. These private and public *maulidis* are not commercially available though there might be a market for it especially in the diaspora.¹⁴³ Therefore the distinction between videos of live performances and music videos that go with a single song is crucial, but not as clear as it may seem.

Barber argues that the “‘cultural imperialism’ thesis’ that posited the swamping of indigenous cultural production with Western consumer culture, did not do justice to the creativity and adaptations/re-workings of media introduced in Africa (2009: 3). She instead observes that imported media while they did also result in ‘real losses’ can also ‘revitalise their traditions and generate new forms’ (2009: 3) as well as open up people’s imagined possibilities (Appadurai 1996: 55, see above.) Barber therefore suggests to constantly balance these theses against the ‘empirical evidence of what people in Africa actually do with the media’ (2009:3).

This ties in well with Askew’s line of thought on Tanzanian music videos published in the same volume. There she talks about the multiplicity of sources (i.e. not just Western ones) and ‘cultural trajectories [that] creatively coexist’ (Askew 2009:208). Which is why she suggests a more flexible approach to analysing Tanzanian music videos doing justice to both the aural and visual features. Therefore analysing them within the postmodernism, youth-culture, visual and technocentric paradigm that dominates the discourse about American music videos did not do justice to the creative adaptivity and performative modes such as improvisation that shape their African counterparts. Furthermore the reception of these videos involved not only the consumption and critique of performance but audiences are much more communal and participatory (Askew 2009: 209-210). These practices are catered for in *qasida* videos by subtitles of the lyrics that allow for a sing-along karaoke.

¹⁴² For a historical sketch of music television culture in Tanzania see Askew 2009:210-211.

¹⁴³ Even though from another community, the video of a public performance of the *Mawlid al-Barzanji* filmed in 2011 in Cape Town is an example for this.

Swahili songs have long drawn inspiration from a wide variety of local and global cultural resources, which we have discussed in the previous chapter. Askew observes that the same is true for music videos (2009: 212). An example for a reflection of the (improvised) insertion of an often used formulation appears at the end of a video by Madrasatul Nahdhat *Ada ya Kharousi* ‘The custom of matrimony.’

♪ Tracks 28 and 25:

Kharusi yo yo,
Kharusi imeshatimia

Oh a wedding!
The wedding has already taken place

Sherehe yo
Ya Harusi imeshatimia

Oh, the feast
Of the wedding is already complete (Q1: 1-2, 3-4)

Harusi yoo yoo
A wedding oh oh (K7: 1)

As the main reference point for videos, Askew identifies Bollywood rather than MTV. In Bollywood song episodes the (film) narrative spills into fantasy blurring the boundary between reality and fantasy together. But the visuals support the lyrics. A similar technique was used extensively in the 1990s Tanzanian *taarab* videos, ‘tack [ing] back and forth between shots of a live performance and enacted scenes’ (Askew 2009: 213) which also blurs the line between reality (live performance) and mediation (enacted scene). With a slight alteration, i.e. not live performances but enacted live performances without audience, that same method is still popular in *qasida* videos. An example is the wedding *qasida* video *Kheir Inshallah* ‘Happy, God willing’ (♪ Track 29) by Madrasatul Nahdhat (2011) that shows the two lead singers in festive attire on armchairs alternately giving advice and wishing well during the stanzas. The boys who are also seated on sofas in the typical *akdi* ‘marriage contract’ ceremony setting are in view during their chorus parts, which also features enacted wedding scenes. The *dua* section at the end shows the two lead singers raising their hands. Along with these ‘gestures and facial expressions to enact or emphasize poetic lyrics’ (Askew 2009:214) the parallel shift of different perspectives and scenes for different structural parts of the song – or in

other words, ‘the editing follows the rhythm of the song’ (Askew 2009:213) are key features that she identifies as evidence of the video supporting the audio.

Also, in the video an allusion to a participating audience is created by inserting *vigelegele* ‘ululations’ with which members of the audience express their joy at wedding celebrations. Likewise, ululations accentuate the immensely popular audio recording of *Sherehe yo* ‘A wedding!’ (see below 7.3 and listen to 🎵 Track 30).

Close-ups of musicians and their instruments during solo parts further supports this argument as it both enacts a live performance and accentuates the shifts between different parts of the song. In another video by Madrasatul Nahdhat *Ada ya Kharousi* ‘The custom of matrimony’ (🎵 Track 28) the *nai* ‘flute’ player is shown during his interlude solo parts.

In addition to the inspirations mentioned by Askew, the widely available Indonesian modern *kasida* videos are a prominent source for Zanzibari *qasida* videos. As in their Indonesian counterparts, the groups are often shown outside in a garden or park setting, where they gently sway back and forth to the rhythm. See also the analysis of *Vifo vya Albino* in 5.3.4 and watch 🎵 Track 23.

In the conclusion, Askew also argues that the balancing of innovative and conservative elements through experimenting with the possibilities of new media, the combining elements from a multiplicity of sources and bringing them together with the inherently performative and improvisational nature of many local genres is what makes them so modern. This ‘aesthetic preference for incessant innovation and the continual incorporation of new elements, both local and foreign’ allows musicians to be less innovative (in comparison to the visually postmodern, innovative visuals) in their videos, sticking to linear narrative and representations of performance (2009: 215-216).

Thus, her conclusions support my earlier argument (chapters 4 and 5) on the various textual features of *qasida*, namely that innovative and conservative aspects are, firstly, mutually constitutive, and secondly, appear distributed in different realms, thus making a single *qasida* exhibit both innovative and conservative elements. There can be no innovation without a tradition to innovate from. At the same time there can be no conservatism or conspicuous preservation of a certain style without innovative styles coexisting.

7.2.2 Mobile *Qasida*

By mobile *qasida* I mean *qasidas* and *qasida*-esque texts that appear in any shape or form on mobile phones. The ubiquity of mobile phones in East Africa is quite remarkable. And they have many uses other than making calls. Besides the obvious use as phones and as music players, they are used as torches, recording devices, for money transfers and many more.¹⁴⁴

Zantel, Zanzibar's largest mobile company had a special Ramadan subscription offer (2010) for music downloads 'Qasidas Ztunes,' as well as 'Prayer Alerts.'¹⁴⁵



Qasida proper as songs on phones are used as ringtones by many, both international Arabic ones with catchy tunes and local *qasida*. Moreover, the phone is used as a portable music player (listened to on headphones or on the internal speakers) as well and almost everyone has a *qasida* on their phones although other musics according to the tastes of the owner appear here as well. Not only but especially during the three-months long power-cut (December 2009 - March 2010) just as *maulidis* became more important forms of entertainment that were more

¹⁴⁴ See also the publications by De Bruijn & Nyamnjoh (2009) & Wassermann (2010).

¹⁴⁵ Zantel also offer a daily *mawaidha* 'religious guidance' service all year.

seriously enjoyed, mobile phones because they are portable and easily chargeable¹⁴⁶ became more important – and everybody has one.

While waiting on a *baraza* ‘bench’ outside the mosque to depart for a *maulidi* with Bakathir, a *mzee*, one of the regulars, sat near me playing the popular *qasida* titled ‘‘aīn al-raḥīmah’ loudly on his mobile and was humming along. (Fieldnotes, 03.03.2010)

This is really just a convenient way of consuming *qasida*, an extension of the recording and broadcasting. Nonetheless, the use of mobile phones perpetuates the ubiquity of *qasida* in the life of urban Zanzibaris of all ages.

Then there is the phenomenon of mobile poetry. Some are proper poems (*mashairi*) some are poetic prose messages. Many are topically related to *qasida*, as they comprise religiously uplifting messages, praise the Prophet, give advice, offer *dua*, or simply wish the recipient a blessed Friday. Other messages of similar stylistic and structural features are more akin to the love poems found in *taarab*.

The *qasida*-esque text messages are not *qasidas* as they are much shorter, and despite the topical and stylistic overlap, they crucially lack the musical performance by a *maulidi* group. However, they are intriguingly close to *qasida* and represent an ingenious way of using text messages to communicate religious content in a poetic format.

These text messages often appear as occasional poetry, offering congratulations and *dua* on the occasion of a holiday, such as Eid, *maulidi*, or simply a Friday.

The first example was sent on the beginning of Ramadan:

Salamu za dhati nakuletea. Na Mtume Azizi namsalia. Mwezi Shaabani umeshatukimbia. Ramadhan Tukufu IMEWADIA. Naomba nyoyoni tusafishe nia. Tusameheane kama NIMEKUKOSEA. Ndivyo RASUL alivyotuuia. Dua kwa Mola tuombeane Saumu na Zote ibada Zitakabaliwe. ‘AMIN’ TUIFUNGE RAMADHAN KWA SALAMA NA AMAN. ATUJALIE MANANI TUIPATE NA MWAKANI. Ammin INSHALLAH. RAMADHAN KARIM (emphasis mine)

Heartfelt greetings I bring to you. And I pray for the beloved Prophet. The month of Shaaban has already left us. Holy Ramadhan has arrived. I pray that we may cleanse our hearts intentions. That we forgive each other if I have hurt you. This is indeed the Prophet’s advice. Let us pray dua to the Lord, our fast and all devotions be

¹⁴⁶ In many places equipped with generators one could charge the phone for free or a small fee (TSh 300).

*accepted. Amin. May we fast Ramadhan in peace and tranquility.
May the Almighty grant us to get it next year. Amin inshallah.
Blessed Ramadhan.*

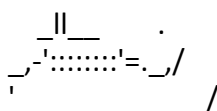
Maulidi ya Mtume ‘the Prophet’s birthday’ is another event for which there are many poetic messages.

Ni furaha ilotimu Kwa mwezi ulo wasili.
Wa kuzaliwa Hashimu Tumwa wetu MUHAMMADI.
Mwenye khuluqi adhimu na tabia mahmudi.
MILADUN-NABY (S.A.W) from Muhammed A. Rajab

*It is perfect happiness, for the moon that has arrived.
(The moon) of the birth of our Prophet Muhammad.
The one with the perfect character and praiseworthy nature.*

These text messages are not limited to text, they often include images and imagery. Another Ramadan message plays on the image of a ship:

M.V. RAMADHAN



Nipo karibu na bandari jiandae na kunipokea, na nimejaza malighafi nzuri kama swaum, maghufira, tabatannasuha, qiamul-layl, na sitokaa muda mrefu nitaondoka nimpishe mwenza wangu M.V. EID-EL-FITRI. Hivyo jiandaekutupokea kwa furaha.

M.V. Ramadhan: I am close to the harbour, get ready to receive me. I am filled with good things, like fasting, forgiveness, staying up at night (prayer), and I will not stay for long until I depart to give way for my partner M.V. Eid el-Fitr. So get ready to receive us with joy.

The joy upon Eid, after the Ramadan fast is expressed with images of hearts and flowers that emphasise the emotional connection between sender and recipient as they both celebrate together.

Example 1:

```

.+""+.+""+.
+ NAKUTAKIA
"+.FURAHA+"
  "+. YA+"
.+""+.+""+.
+ IDDY  :+
"+. NA "+.'
  "+.+"  MUNGU AKUBARIKI
KWA KILA JAMBO.

```

I wish you a joyful Eid and may God bless you in everything.

Example 2:

Wooow!

```

  *,%:*
*,%*,%*,*
*,%*,%*,%*,*
  ) (
  ( )
Fresh flowers for
U  to say
"*E =I =D
MUBARAK*"

```

Mobile phones are everywhere, even at *maulidis*.



Plate 7.07 The Bakathir drummers using their mobile phones during a reading from the *Barzanji*, 23.08.2008.

7.3 POPULAR CULTURE: *QASIDA* & *BONGO FLAVA*

In the urban landscape, *qasida* and a variety of other musical genres coexist. As we have seen above through recording and distribution in various media *qasida* has by association as well as musical and textual changes moved into this new context. Whereas before it was a genre enjoyed as live performance at social and religious events, now it is also a style of popular music. However, it should be remembered that *maulidi* has long been perceived as popular religion (Loimeier 2006: 112). Therefore the adaptation of *qasida* into popular culture/music is one of amplification and intensification, or in other words it is both a qualitative and quantitative progression but not a reversal.

Moreover, *madrasas* have a long-established role in the musical education of many who later became musicians and singers. At *madrasas* they received their first training by learning to recite the Qur'an. 'Though the link between Qur'anic recitation and popular music is [...] tenuous in Tanzania, Islamic schools provide some level of musical instruction for artists' (Perullo 2011: 154). Virtually all Muslim artists in Tanzania attended a *madrasa* during their childhood, where they also learned to sing *qasidas* and some to play *dufu*. This applies to *taarab* singers as well as rap artists. *Madrasas* thus 'play a role in training singers in the ability to perform, sing, and compose poetic music' (Perullo 2011: 154-155). As the genre that lays the foundations of musical education, *qasida* is an influential component of how musicians (and audiences) produce and receive any type of music. Analogous to Kristeva's 'absorption and transformation' (1980: 66) of all music listened to, *qasida* is part of their musical competence, 'a repertoire of skills, dispositions, and expectations' (Barber 2009: 37). Previous exposure to music builds up expectations that are supplemented and modified both in composing or improvising and in listening and remembering. Reception is an active process of 'configuring its elements in relation to a scheme of expectations and observations as it unfolds, or as you unfold it' (Barber 2009: 210-211).

Just like the range of music sold at cart music shops, for most young people in Zanzibar *qasida* is enjoyed alongside other musical styles and activities. This

certainly also holds true for the majority of performers who like to listen to *Bongo Flava* and Bollywood tunes and play football. To a few, however, *qasida* is the only 'music' they listen to. Nassir likes *qasidas* and especially Bakathir's are his favourites, because they have deep and meaningful poetry as well as beautiful melodies (informal conversation, June 2010).

In order to better understand the relation between *qasida* and other genres of popular music, this subchapter will juxtapose it with the surprisingly similar *Bongo Flava*.

By popular culture and music, I do not mean a superficial or trivial mass culture that is clearly delineated from 'high culture' nor an idealised vision of a practice of reception that is opposed to consumer culture. Rather popular culture is understood as a cultural sphere that is on the one hand affected by commercial practices and on the other hand a flexible and dynamic realm that allows a variety of (marginalised) social groups to represent and express themselves (Mayer 2004: 535-536).

*Bongo Flava*¹⁴⁷ is often referred to as Tanzanian hip-hop, however, it is a much broader category that includes 'many internationally popular genres of music, such as rap, zouk, and r&b' (Perullo 2011: 363). Young Tanzanians use percussive samples, although there are a few examples of live bands, and sing in Swahili about the issues that concern them. 'In the early period of Swahili-based rapping, most lyrics addressed social and political issues. A more current trend for rap, as well as r&b, is to sing about love, relationships, and sex, though a large portion of the [texts] still discusses socially conscious issues' (Perullo 2011: 363).

Both *qasida* and *Bongo Flava* are listened to across generations, across gender, and across class. But those who actively engage in it and perform it are youths, with some of the strings in the background pulled by *wazee* 'elders' who essentially control the business and/or what is acceptable. Both are social activism genres, though they rhetorically work from opposite ends: while *Bongo Flava* points at existing problems, *qasida* portrays an ideal. In addition to their hortative intentions both *qasidas* and *Bongo Flava* songs are often clearly celebratory, in the form of praise for the Prophet or a loved one. Indeed many simply celebrate life and are meant to be danced to. Here, the repetitive textual patterns and fast rhythms

¹⁴⁷ The term *Bongo Flava* will be used to include *Zenji Flava*.

provide an easily graspable message and enable the audience (and performers) to physically experience the music.

Just like *qasida*, *Bongo Flava* is not a homogenous monolith but there is considerable variety within them. Therefore, the following illustrations of the three mentioned themes (social issues, praise/love, and celebration) are by no means a comprehensive representation of *Bongo Flava*.¹⁴⁸

Mafumbo ‘riddles, metaphors’ (see 4.4.2 for more uses in *qasida*) is a widely used rhetorical tool in Swahili poetry that allows poets to express something indirectly that is not appropriate to be said openly, such as sexual allusions. Although *Bongo Flava* artists have more license to speak directly their lyrics are still not sexually explicit or violent.

Pole Samaki ‘Sorry, Fish’ by OffSidetrick and AT compares women to fish that suffer from whatever people can think of doing to it about how men abuse women and society thinks that is okay, but when women do the same it is a huge issue. He apologises for this behaviour.¹⁴⁹

Sisi tunawala nyinyi Nyinyi mkitula sisi
Habari magazetini TV na maofisi

*We eat you, when you eat us,
It is all over the newspapers, on TV and (talked about) at work.*

Other issues can be tackled more directly in *Bongo Flava*. In his song *Si ulinizaa wewe* ‘Did not you give birth to me?’ Q-Chief very straightforwardly talks to his father, who abandoned his pregnant mother, then just a teenager. She was ostracised by her family and expelled from school. Because of all this distress she died just after childbirth. He was then picked up by a passer-by and raised by her. She became his mother. His father always rejected him, but now that he is a successful singer, he comes after him. 🎵 Track 31.

Refrain:

Si ulinizaa wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa
Si ulinizaa wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa

¹⁴⁸ A number of publications that study *Bongo Flava* in more depth have appeared in the last decade. For an extensive bibliography see Perullo 2011, especially pages 363-364.

¹⁴⁹ I am grateful to Abubakar Mikidad and Mohammed Taj for help with decoding.

Did not you give birth to me and deny me? Now how comes you think I am suitable?

Did not you give birth to me and deny me? Now how comes you think I am suitable?

Kosa langu kosa langu ni lipi baba?

Kosa langu kosa langu ni lipi baba?

What is my mistake, father?

What is my mistake, father?

Ulinikana tangu tumboni

Ukamkana hadi mama mama'angu

Nyumbani nyumbani wakamfukuza

Shuleni shuleni wakamfukuza

Wakamwita malaya kwa miimba aliyobeba

Iya ni mimi jamani, jamani, jamani

Miezi tisa ilipo ada chini ya mbuyu nikazaliwa

Mifuko ya ramba nikafunikiwa

Ili baridi lisinipige

You denied me since I was in (my mother's) belly

You even denied my mother

At home, they chased her away

At school, they chased her away

They called her 'prostitute' because of the pregnancy

But that was me, friends

After nine months as it is usual, I was born below a baobab tree

I was wrapped in grass baskets

So that the cold would not beat me

Kwa presha na mawazo

Mama'angu mama'angu mama'angu akaiga dunia mama'angu

Nalia nalia nalia mimi nalia

Nalia ukiwa wa mama'angu

Niacheni nilie

Because of the pressure and the thoughts

My mother, my mother, my mother said goodbye to the world, my mother

I cry, I cry, I cry, me, I cry

I cry, the bereavement of my mother

Leave me crying

Pita njia pita njia akaniokota

Akanilea akanisomesha

Nikamthamini akanithamini

Nikamwita mama akajibu mwanangu

Leo nimekuwa kanisimulia

*Someone came along the way and rescued me
 She brought me up, sent me to school
 I respect/value her, she respects/values me
 I call her 'mama' and she answers me 'my child'
 Today I am grown she told me*

Inauma sana unajua inakera sana unajua
 Eti mtu baba'ako yupo ila hakujali wala hakupendi
 Hana time na wewe
 Inauma sana inauma sana

*It hurts a lot, you know, it torments a lot, you know
 Hey, your father is there, but he does not care for you nor does he love you
 He does not have time for you
 It hurts a lot, it hurts a lot*

Moyo wangu sijui kama nitaweza kumsamehe
 Moyo wangu sijui kama nitaweza kumsamehe
 Nimejaribu nimeshindwa kumsamehe mimi siwezi
 Namwachia Mungu baba muumba wa vyote

*My heart, I do not know if I'll be able to forgive him
 I tried, I failed, to forgive him I cannot
 I leave him to God, the creator of everything*

Si ulinizaa wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa
 Si ulinizaa wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa
 Sasa maisha yameninyookea unaona mimi nafaa

*Did not you give birth to me and deny me? Now how comes you think me fit?
 Did not you give birth to me and deny me? Now how comes you think me fit?
 Now that life is smooth, you think I am suitable?*

In just one song, Q-Chief talks about teenage pregnancy, absent fathers, greed, and the adoptive parents. It is a very emotional autobiographic account, in powerful moving language. Its truth, and the fact that similar things happen in Tanzania every day but nobody wants to talk about them make it extremely relevant.

Moral appeal combined with emotion is also a frequent strategy in *qasida*. However, this *Bongo Flava* song presents a complete narrative rather than a string of descriptions as *qasidas* often do. Also, typically for *Bongo Flava* the song is about 'me' and does not use the communal 'we.' But on closer examination, he exposes his father's negative behaviour not his own. This third person description is a feature that the two genres share. Although the traditional *qasidas* portray positive examples, ideals even, a number of recent *qasidas* have started to employ negative examples, such as the killers of albinos (see 4.4.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4 and 6.2.2).

This type of social comment existed before the advent of *Bongo Flava* in the 1990s. It has replaced *Muziki wa Dansi*, another genre of popular music and social comment that is danced to from about the mid-1990s (see 1.4.2). The artistic discourse about AIDS/HIV developed as attempts to come to terms with the effects of the disease. In Tanzania, Remmy Ongala became one of very few commentators to openly encourage condom use as the best form of prevention. His song *Mambo Kwa Soksi* – translated as ‘Affairs of the Socks’ – provoked controversy as it was first written and performed sometime between 1989 and 1990, when the cultural and religious attitude to HIV/Aids was still firmly rooted in the moralist discourse described above. The word *soksi* in the title refers to a Swahili slang word for condoms (Hilhorst 2009).

Sadly until today the topic has remained relevant and comes up in *qasidas* (4.1. and 5.3.2) and *Bongo Flava* alike. Rarely is *ukimwi* ‘AIDS’ named or explicitly linked to sexual transmission. In *Nzela* by the B Band (circa 2009) it is called *ugonjwa mzito* ‘a heavy/grave disease.’ The song urges a young woman to come back home and settle down. *MacMuga* by Ali Kiba (circa 2008) is a similar song that recounts the story of a young man who was once promising, went abroad to South Africa, but now has thrown away his life by drug abuse. Dramatic life stories like these and drug abuse are not (yet) tackled in *qasida*.

Ear Candy: Love and Dancing

Much *Bongo Flava*, however, is not socially activist: Love songs and fun catchy tunes made for dancing are widespread and very popular. Among the ‘modern’ ones one can also find *qasidas* that are celebratory and upbeat. The above mentioned *Pole Samaki* as well as another song by OffsideTrick *Bata* ‘Duck’ although they have a (sexual innuendo) message, are very danceable and fun. Some *Bongo Flava* artists, such as Chege and Offside Trick, are known for their focus on rhythm and dance, which is obvious in their videos that feature a standard East African dance element the formation of a *duara* ‘circle,’ or Congolese Rumba inspired dancing where the focus is on hip-gyrations. ‘There are no instruments or shots of live performance’ and thus ‘[e]mphasis is placed on dance virtuosity, forcing both the lyrics and the music to take second place to the dance’ (Askew 2009: 214). This technique singles out one performative feature and takes advantage of its visual appeal.

While at *maulidis* dancing is part of performance, the women (and to a lesser degree the performers) do dance and have fun, *qasida* is not danced to in a way that makes an individual stand out but it is a communal expression of joy. A good example is the hit *Sherehe Yo* ‘Rejoicing’¹⁵⁰ (🎵 Track 30) recorded in early 2009 which also builds on the bipartite structuring. Especially the faster second part with its refrain that is a meta-commentary on celebrating and dancing:

Cheza cheza leo ‘mepata bwana

Dance, dance, for today you got a husband.

This song was very popular throughout 2009-10 and played both at weddings, in homes and loudly as advertisement by music shops and pushcart sellers.

This is exactly what a number of scholars criticise, not *maulidi* as such but the emphasis on drumming and dancing (see 3.5.5). Interestingly this criticism of music as a corrupting force or distraction from more serious activities also appears in *Bongo Flava*. In his song *Utaipenda* ‘You will like it’¹⁵¹ Hussein Machozi reacts to this showing a woman listening to music who is criticised by a man (her husband?). He says that the music only makes her unnecessarily emotional and does not help her at all in life. He calls the music *upuuzi* ‘nonsense’ and *ujinga* ‘foolishness.’ Therefore he switches off the music, but after she has left the room and he switches it on again, he cannot resist the rhythm and starts dancing. In the end *utaipenda* ‘you will like it.’

Furthermore, albeit it is a very different kind of dance, *Maulidi ya Homu* has a very complex choreography that only highly skilled dancers can achieve with daily practice (3.4.2). Watch 🎵 Tracks 15-17 and 27.

Love songs are popular in *Bongo Flava* (as in other genres, e.g. *taarab*). They revolve around the themes of praising the beloved and pining for them. A variation that includes both is on how to choose your partner or spouse. As we have seen in *Oa* (5.1.2) mutual love and a set of characteristics are portrayed as key for a

¹⁵⁰ The *qasida* was originally composed by Sheikh Jafar Abdalla and performed at his Madrasa Aswahaabull in 2008. The Amani Qadiriya played it as well, recorded it and made it famous in 2009 (Pers. comm. Abubakar Mikidad 13.12.2010).

¹⁵¹ Circa 2009 from the album *Kwa ajili yako* ‘For your sake,’ Tetemesha Recordz, directed by Adam Juma for Visual Lab.

successful marriage. Crucially, outward appearances are seen as deceptive and a good character is to be favoured. In his debut *Nikikupata* 'If I get you' Ben Pol¹⁵² expresses the same thought:

Uzuri sio sura
[...]
Kama wengi wanavyodhani
Bali ni nzuri tabia
Hekima na ukarimu wako
Busara na imani
Beauty is not (to be found in) the face
[...]
As many people think
But it is in a beautiful character,
In wisdom and kindness,
In common sense/prudence and trust.

And in an extension of the importance of mutual love he concludes:

Ubora wa mapenzi wawili kuaminiana
The best of love, is for two people to trust one another.

However, having these qualities is not always enough to gain the love of a woman in urban Tanzania. Diamond laments in his popular *Mbagala*¹⁵³ (circa 2009) how living in this poor suburban area of Dar es Salaam called Mbagala has ruined his chances of marrying his sweetheart. Watch 🎵 Track 32.

Busara na upole
Urithi nilopata kwa mama'angu
Vyote hakuvijali
Wisdom and gentleness
Is my inheritance from my mother
But she did not care about that.

Refrain:

Tatizo kwetu mbagala hapa nyuma mbele jalala
The problem here at Mbagala, are rubbish heaps everywhere.

When he sings about how much he was hurt when he saw a sheikh burning incense and someone else giving her a ring, the video shows this *akdi* 'Muslim wedding

¹⁵² Published by Sauti za Bongo (2010).

¹⁵³ From the 2020 Album *Kamwambie* 'Tell her.' Sharobaro Records; video directed by Adam Juma for Nextlevel Productions.

contract ceremony.’ The *qasida* videos by Madrasat Nahdhat discussed in the previous section depict very similar scenes to support the lyrics.

Diamond again tackles the impact of poverty on love relationships in another recent (2011) song. *Nitarejea* ‘I will return’¹⁵⁴ is a conversation between husband and wife who live in a rural area. He has to leave because,

Zile taabu na njaa
Vile vile mavuno hakuna

*Poverty and hunger
And there is no harvest*

Love and support are not enough in the face of poverty; he has to leave and seek a better income in town so that he can provide for his family in the village.

These recent songs are not only descriptions of the serious repercussions of poverty and bad living conditions but also criticisms of consumer culture. As Perullo explains, ‘[...] the presence of foreign and local music videos creates desires for wealth, power, and fame as visualized through images of performers. In videos, artists appear successful, content, and surrounded by consumer pleasures often unattainable to the average Tanzanian’ (2011: 142)

Qasida videos and lyrics on the other hand do not depict unattainable life styles although they convey ideals. Although the reality is more complex, a simple generalisation of *qasida* and *Bongo Flava* would be to say that they have same intention: improving society. They express similar thoughts but argue from opposite ends. *Qasida* on the one hand proposes an ideal, either by a ‘real’ example, i.e. the Prophet, or by the subjunctive technique (how should a husband, wife, child be) and *Bongo Flava* on the other hand tells stories of negative examples: drug addicts, teenage pregnancies, greedy people, unemployment, poverty, lack of professional and private opportunities (how it should not be).

The two seemingly opposite genres are both part of mainstream popular culture in Tanzania that are enjoyed by people of all ages and from all social groups. But especially interesting are the striking similarities of *qasida* and *Bongo Flava* songs their lyrics and videos. The differences that do exist make them complementary rather than opposed to each other.

¹⁵⁴ Published by Sauti za Bongo.

The hybridity displayed in African entertainment video industries relate to rather different historical transformations which have initiated their own forms of cultural ambiguity. Technological changes in the last four decades can be related to wider changes in ideology, particularly the move from the static economic policies, Pan-African ideologies and one-party politics of the 1960s, 70s and 80s towards a capitalist, commercial economic base with its (often spurious) links to an ideology of pluralism, democracy and individualism. (Kerr 2011: xvi)

Qasida and *Bongo Flava* are two types of popular cultures that often coexist in the lives of the youths who perform and who listen to these two genres among the music they like.

Epilogue: Pole Zanzibar¹⁵⁵

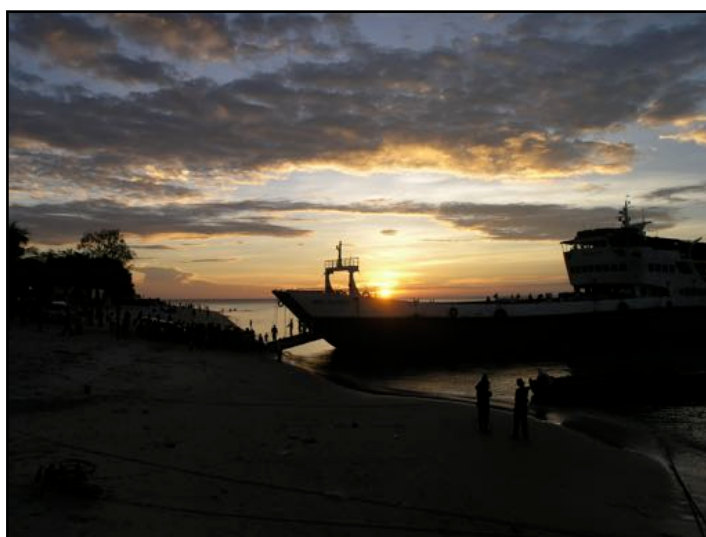


Plate 7.08 MV Spice Islander being loaded at Forodhani, Stone Town, 10.02.2010.

This song is a reaction to the sinking of the MV Spice Islander on 10. 09.2011. A number of *Bongo Flava* artists collaborated on the song that came out only about a week after the ferry disaster. They express their sorrow and condole with the relatives of the victims, among whom were many women and children travelling back to Pemba after the Eid el-Fitr holidays. Watch 🎵 Track 33.

¹⁵⁵ Recorded and published by Akhenaton Records. Video directed by Eddie Juma and produced by Visual Lab.

E Mola walaze pema peponi,
 E Mola walaze pema peponi
 Pole pole Wazanzibari
 Pole sote kwa ajali

*Oh Lord, may they rest in peace in paradise,
 Oh Lord, may they rest in peace in paradise,
 Sorry, Sorry, Zanzibaris,
 Sorry to us all for the accident.*

Ni msiba wetu sote	wa bara na visiwani
Ajali hua popote	tusimlaumu nani
Yaliyopita si ndwele	tugange yale yajayo
Kwa uwezo wa Rabbuka	twaweza kupata mafao

*It is the bereavement of us all, of the mainland and of the islands,
 Wherever an accident takes place, we should not blame anyone,
 What has happened is not sickness, let us remedy/save/free from a charm
 what is s(till) to come
 By the Lord's might, that's how we may get deliverance from disaster.*

Mola akipanga haipanguki
 Kila nafsi itaonja mauti mauti
 Ni vigumu kusahau
 Mola atupe subira
 Ya Karim
 Ya Latif
 Ya Jabbar tujalie subira

*When the Lord plans, it cannot be
 Every soul will have a taste of death, death,
 It is hard to forget,
 May the Lord give us patience,
 Oh Most Generous,
 Oh Most Kind,
 Oh, Almighty, grant us patience.*

Pole Pole Wazanzibari
 Pole sote kwa ajali
 Pole sana pole sana
 Pole sote kwa ajali

*Sorry, Sorry, Zanzibaris,
 Sorry to us all for the accident,
 Sorry, Sorry, Zanzibaris,
 Sorry to us all for the accident.*

Wamekwenda
 Ndugu zetu wa wa Zanzibar

Atayefuata
Si mwengine ni mimi na wewe

*They are gone,
Our brothers from Zanzibar,
Who will follow (them),
Is none other than me and you.*

Watanzania wanalia nguvu kazi kuipoteza
Wengine kinamama na watoto walioenda
Tunabaki kuhuzunika
Makubwa yalotukuta
Kila mtu ameshtuka
Taifa limetingishika
Kweli uchungu unauma
Ila pole mlofiwa
Dua tele ntaomba
Mjuwe tuko pamoja

*Tanzanians are crying, because they lost their strength, their work,
Many of those who went are women and children,
We are left to be sad,
About the disaster that happened to us,
Everyone is devastated,
The nation is shaken,
Truly, the bitterness hurts,
(We can) only (say) sorry to those who are bereaved,
Plenty of supplications I will make,
Know that we are together in this.*

Ni machozi watu wanalia
Kumwomba Mola
Atupe subira

*The people cry tears,
To ask the Lord,
To give us patience.*

Vijana na watoto na wazee
Muhimu kwetu sisi tuwaombee
Walazwe pema peponi
Serikali yetu ijitolee
Ajali kama hii isitokee

*Youths and children and elders,
It is important that we supplicate for them,
So that they may rest in peace in paradise,
Our government should put itself forward,
So that an accident like this will not happen again.*

Despite being a *Bongo Flava* song, context, instrumentation and artist-wise, the text itself resembles a *qasida*: From the beginning it is constructed as a prayer to God, a *dua*, and throughout uses the typical ‘we.’ The construction of the song with alternating stanzas and a refrain is typical of both *qasida* and *Bongo Flava* compositions. A loose rhyme and syllable pattern.

However, the stanzas vary considerably in their nature, as they are each composed and presented by a different artist much in the way of the mosaic technique, unified by a common refrain that is sung *uni sono*. Only the first stanza adheres to the syllable and rhyme structures of classical Swahili poetry (4.2.1), the remainder of the song is like the *vugo*-type *qasidas* (4.2.2) with rhyme patterning.

Stylistically a mix of the more traditional and more modern styles (as discussed in chapter 4.4). Appeals to God, including a variety of praise names, and the mention of *dua* are traditional *qasida* style.

Tujaalie subira

Give us patience

is a communal ‘we’ *dua* that could appear in a *qasida* as well. But they also appear combined with the street language of youths typical of *Bongo Flava* and a first person singular:

Dua tele ntaomba

I will make loads of *dua*

Tuko pamoja

We are together.

In the video pictures of the sinking and rescue are alternated with the artists who are either shown standing in a group of sad looking children or in a studio setting singing their solo parts. Again the images support the lyrics in their expression of mourning.

Although this is a *Bongo Flava* song performed by *Bongo Flava* artists it is consciously *qasida*-like and even quotes a Qur’anic phrase in the exact wording:

Kila nafsi itaonja mauti

Every soul will taste death.

From *Kullu nafsin dā’iqatu al-mawt* ‘Every person [or soul] will taste death [...]’ (Qur’an 3: 185).

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

‘With changes in the basis of sociality, and an expansion in the means of communication, new modes of addressivity came onto the scene. It became possible to conceptualise the audience as an anonymous, extensive “public” made up of equivalent and interchangeable units, simultaneously receiving the words addressed to them. [...] But these new modes of addressing audiences as publics were not established overnight, and they did not wholly displace other, longer-established conceptions of the audience. Different kinds of addressivity cohabited. [...]

The conceptualisation of audiences as publics has implications for the very conception of text and how texts are held to have meaning. [...] In the act of alluding to presumed public knowledge, they impart it. They are thus actively and consciously helping to build a new public sphere, and it is no accident that so much modern African popular culture is frankly didactic.’

(Barber 2009: 202-203).

The fixing of *qasidas* on recordings and other media technologies have transformed *qasida* and perceptions of the genre. *Qasida* has (albeit recently) become commercialised and is now sold alongside other musical styles. Furthermore, through audio recordings, video, and mobile phones audiences are removed which creates a different perception of public and entails a new way of addressing this public. Literature and other art forms play a crucial role in shaping the identities of individuals and collective imaginations. This points to the active relationship between literature and its audiences, which ties in well with the participatory nature of live performances.

Apart from commercial success and fame the audio and video *qasidas* serve as advertisements for the groups and aid the intention of spreading their messages.

The increasingly available videos support music and lyrics by images of performances (including audience participation) and enacted narrative and emotion. The editing follows the rhythm of the song.

Combining elements from a multiplicity of sources with inherently performative and improvisational features reveals an ‘aesthetic preference for incessant innovation’ (Askew 2009: 215) in music and lyrics. To balance this, the videos recount a linear narrative and represent performance.

Through ring-tones, *qasida*-esque text messages, and as music players, mobile phones perpetuate the ubiquity of *qasida* in everyday life.

As part of popular culture in Zanzibar, *qasida* is enjoyed by people of all ages and from all social groups. The same is true for *Bongo Flava*. Between the two genres there are some interesting similarities. Both are socially activist in that they seek to improve society. To this end, their lyrics combine their moral appeal with emotion. Along with their hortative messages, both genres also provide music for enjoyment and recreation with light-hearted lyrics that focus on celebration. Here the repetitive textual patterns and fast rhythms enable audiences and performers to physically experience the music (dancing).

However, they argue from opposite standpoints: while *Bongo Flava* songs narratively explore real problems, *qasidas* offer descriptions of an ideal world. *Bongo Flava* singers are usually solo artist and their lyrics reflect this in the use of the first person, while *qasida* artists appear in groups and employ the communal 'we.'

Qasida has a prominent place in Zanzibari (and to a lesser degree United Republic) media. Since the loosening of government control in the early 1990s, there has been a diversification of the media landscape that reflects the variety of tastes and interests. Yet, *qasida* has long played a role in the musical competence of audiences and performers (of other genres too), which has had a profound impact on musical production and reception.

Taking everything into account, the adaptation of *qasida* into popular culture/music is one of amplification and intensification, or in other words it is both a qualitative and quantitative progression but not a reversal. Even though music is a form of entertainment and especially in the case of *qasida* carries notions of ceremony, it is also 'shaped by people's interests in connecting sound to daily life. [...] Music, in other words, takes on new meanings as society undergoes economic and political transformations' (Perullo 2011: 186).

Be it in the textual features, facilitated by the rigidity of the *maulidi* grid, through inter-textual relations, or as in this chapter, the transposition into new media (audio and video recordings) and contexts (popular culture), *qasida* are a 'work of instauration (simultaneously creating and preserving forms)' (Barber 2007:201).

Chapter Eight

Conclusions



'I stopped trying to define Punk around the same time I stopped trying to define Islam. They aren't so far removed as you'd think. Both began in tremendous bursts of truth and vitality but seem to have lost something along the way – the energy, perhaps, that comes with knowing the world has never seen such a positive force and fury and never would again. Both have suffered from sell-outs and hypocrites, but also from true believers whose devotion had crippled their creative drive. Both are viewed by outsiders as unified, cohesive communities when nothing can be further from the truth.

I could go on but the most important similarity is that like Punk as mentioned above, Islam is itself a flag, an open symbol representing not things, but ideas. You cannot hold Punk or Islam in your hands. So what could they mean besides what you want them to?' (Knight 2004: 7)

I am now also about to stop trying to define *qasida*. Urban Zanzibari *qasida* is also not a unified, cohesive genre nor are the people who perform *qasida* such a kind of community. *Qasida* is ephemeral, as are all oral genres; it is an idea that you cannot pin down. It means many things to different people in different contexts. And it is ever-changing; each new generation of *qasidas* and performers is vibrant and spiritual. *Qasida* is what Barber calls a 'work of instauration (simultaneously creating *and* preserving forms)' (2007: 201).

A similar thought relating to time is also expressed in *qasida* texts: they transcend time as they evoke stories from the past, make them relevant to current society (after all the addressees are always the people present in the moment of performance). But through advice, be it direct or indirect, and good wishes, *qasida* also seek to influence the future positively and minimise risk. As through the communal intention (reflected in the pervasive communal 'we') and supplication a *qasida* is believed to convey *baraka* from the Divine, '*Mawlid* is a medium of *baraka*' (Katz 2007: 84).

Qasidas are varied and variable; as are all modes of Swahili musical and literary production, and reception. This entails plurality, a simultaneity of a variety of *qasida* styles, but not at all an absolute liberty of expression and action. This diversity of form is meaningful because the many shapes of *qasida* are in a debate with and complement each other and do not merely coexist. In this thesis I have attempted

to capture this variety by presenting contemporary material, give a detailed view of the genre and locate it within the larger socio-historical context.

Exemplified by *qasida*, we have seen that the notion of genre as ‘kind’ is not a concept that can be established entirely externally because the ‘idea of genre is constitutive of texts themselves’ (Barber 2009: 32). Any utterance is shaped by the conventions of genre. Both the speaker in creating and directing it at an audience and the audience operate on the assumption of these conventions. This implies that genres exist only in relation to others. Which makes genre the ‘key between the individual work and others’ (Barber 2009: 43). The constant revision of these conventions with every new utterance and reception, or a ‘series of departures from what already exists’ (Barber 2009: 44) is what consolidates tradition.

This flexible approach is much more apt than a static one to capture both historical developments and synchronic indistinct boundaries. It also allows to conceive of literature as a sophisticated manifestation not only of beauty but also of complexity.

Especially in the last chapter, we have seen how *qasida* is constantly adapted to new contexts, through recording and distribution through a variety of media. The creative practice of *qasida* has been extended by the ingenious ways especially young people use new technologies. Today *qasida* is popular and vibrant, happening right now it is an exciting research topic. More research is needed on the interfaces between *qasida* (and other genres of verbal art) and popular culture, and the incorporation of new media.

Opportunities for future research, however, are not limited to the new media. The history of *qasida* on the Swahili coast is still largely unknown. We lack collections of texts, their linguistic and literary analyses, and studies of performative practices, especially on the workings of *vugo*- and mosaic-style *qasidas*. Ethnomusicological research of *qasida*’s music and choreography could provide much needed insights that would complement both the more literary studies of the genre as well as add to the existing scholarship on other East African musical genres.

There is a wealth of opportunities for research along the Swahili coast, including neighbouring cultures from the Comoros to the Bajun Islands.

Comparative approaches in all these fields could add interesting perspectives, extending the view regionally (across the Indian Ocean, to Oman, Yemen, South Asia, and Indonesia) or to similar genres in Swahili, such as (Christian) choir music. Beyond academic research, *qasida* is well-suited to be promoted as a musical genre on an international level. This applies particularly to *Maulidi ya Homu* that is ‘simply breathtaking’ (Broughton 2012: 75).

The main arguments presented herein are:

Maulidis are at once enjoyable musical performances and Islamic veneration during social and religious celebrations, such as weddings and commemorations of the Prophet’s birthday. Throughout the *maulidi* performance *qasidas* are recited alongside chapters of the *Mawlid Barzanji*, a prose hagiographic account of Muhammad’s life written by Imām Jaʿfar al-Barzanji (1690-1766 AD). Another less frequently performed type is *Maulidi ya Homu*, which arranges a mosaic of several *qasidas* in a *dahala*. The compositions praise the Prophet, recount his life or relate to their respective context of performance, combining reason, moral and emotional appeals as well as celebration in their poetry.

The *qasidas* are either a cappella, accompanied by frame drums, or even synthesisers. Music, dancing, and audience participation are integral parts of the event. Over the course of the performance, there is a gradual increase of speed, volume and flexibility across *maulidi*. This climaxing is balanced by pauses and the alternation with the slower readings from the *Barzanji* that are part of the codified structure of the events. Transitions between the elements are marked off by formulae in a framing and nesting technique. Within, and possibly because of, this rigid framework there is a heterogeneity of styles. The traditional range of topics (the Prophet, *dua* and congratulations, advice) is being expanded to the enjoyment of life and new topics (social issues); *qasida* prosody comes in the classical metrical and the *vugo*-type; the structure ranges from *shairi* to mosaic via bipartite; the stylistic options available include language choice (Swahili and Arabic), an array of rhetorical figures, and patterning by quality of voice.

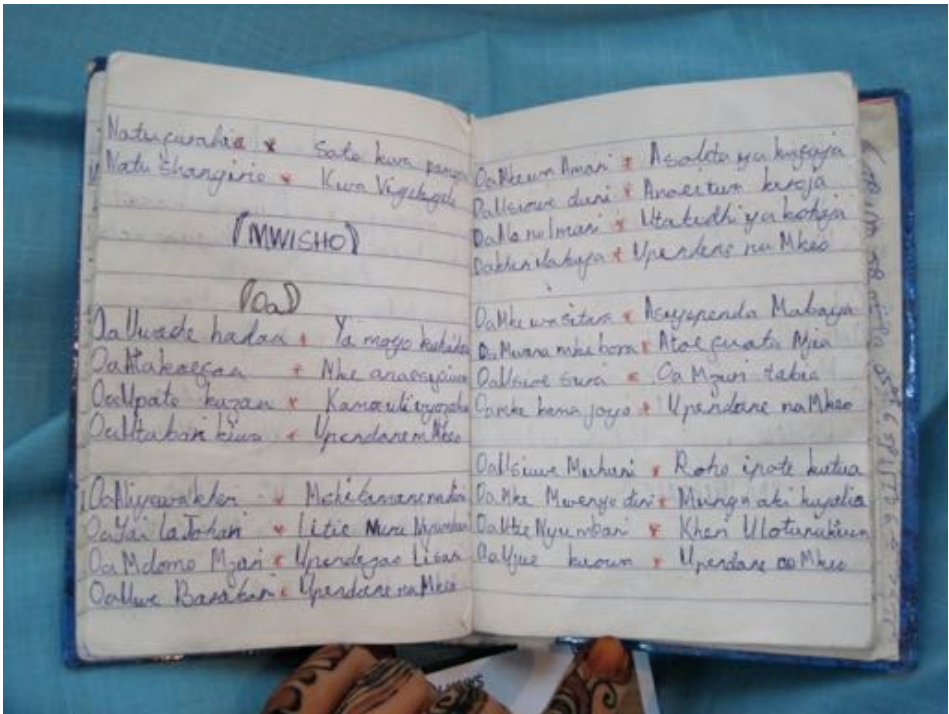
Both musical and textual features vary on a range of levels between the traditional and innovative poles, resulting in a matrix of continua. Intertextual relations with past and contemporary texts from local and translocal genres are palpable in *qasida*. They reveal the interconnection of *qasida* with a larger literary culture and complicate notions of authorship.

A centuries-old tradition in Zanzibari life, *qasida* is ever more ubiquitous in the urban landscape today: Social transformations and technological innovations (recordings, video, and mobile phones) have contributed to its recent rise. *Qasida* is a vital genre because it integrates new features while at the same time keeping some core properties. *Qasida* adapts to new (media) channels while still catering to its traditional context. It constantly reassesses boundaries of acceptability and thus simultaneously creates and preserves tradition.

And there is no doubt about *qasida's* ultimate principles: praising the Prophet and partying (having fun).

Wasalaam.

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Name, year of birth, *tariqa* (if applicable), *qasida* group, date of interview.

Abulkheir Hassan Muhammad, born 1945, 20.08.2008

Aisha Shaaban, born 1965, Miembeni, 31.08.2008

Aman, Rajab and Nassor, all born circa 1980, Tarbiya Islamiya Mfereji wa Wima, 08.08.2008, 30.08.2008

Barua Ussi Khamis, born 1969, Rifā'iyya, Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni, 25.08.2009, 23.10.2009, 16.11.2009

Farhan Mussa (1979), Suleiman Juma (1984), Hamid Hashil (1983), Makame Juma (1978), Rifā'iyya, Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni, 13.03.2010

Hamad Bakari Mohamed, born 1962, Qādiriyya, Qadiriya Amani, 23.05.2010

Ibrahim Bakar Salum, born 06.03.1974, 'Alawiyya, Bakathir, 26.08.2008, 19.10.2009

Jabir Haidar, born 1979, Naqshbandiya, 13.12.2009

Mlengi, born 1979, Qādiriyya, from Zamzam, 31.08.2008

Muhammad Abdallah Rajab, born 1971, 'Alawiyya 12.08.2008, 28.08.2008

Muhammad Abdulrahman Mwinyi 'Dedes', born 1952, Qādiriyya, 29.08.2008, 04.09.2008

Muhammad Idris Muhammad Salih, born 1934, deceased 05.03.2012, 14.08.2008

Muhammad Salim Muhammad: born 1963, Shādhiliya, Msolopa, 03.08.2008, 23.08.2008, 07.09.2008

Mzee Majid, Rifā'iyya, Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni, 22.11.2009

Nassir Ali (1986), Ayoub (1992), and Foum (1985), Bakathir, 12.05.2010, 31.05.2010

Nassor Abdallah 'Bachu,' born 1951, Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-jamā'ah, 20.06.2010

Sameer Zulfikar Ramzan, born 06.09.1977, 'Alawiyya, 07.08.2008

Sheikh A. (pseudonym), Qādiriyya, 15.06.2010

Sheikh Abdulwahhab Alawy, born April 1936, 'Alawiyya, 06.08.2008

Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Habshi, born 1965, 'Alawiyya, Bakathir, 12.08.2008

TVZ employee, anonymous, circa 35 years old, May 2010

Yunus Abdallah Sameja, born 20.02.1956, 05.09.2008, 11.09.2008

In addition there were informal conversations with:

Omar Babu, poet and Swahili scholar, via email;

Abdul Sheriff, director of ZIORI, 11.08.2009;

with more boys from Bakathir and Maulidi ya Homu ya Mtendeni;

the girls from Swiffat Nabawiyatul (especially Fatma, born 1989, and Mwanamvua, born 1982);

in my host family: Salma Salim Abdallah, Bikombo;

with my father Werner Graebner;

And with friends: Abubakar Mikidadi Othman, Farouque Abdela, Farid Himid, Talib Ali Talib, Mohamed Taj 'Mkenya.'

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Appendixes



Appendix 1: CORPUS OF SONGS

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Bakathir

B1 Oa 'Marry!'

Sheikh Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Oa uwache hadaa | Ya moyo kuhadaiwa |
| 2 | Oa atakaefaa | Mke anaesifiwa |
| 3 | Oa upate kuzaa | Kama ulivyojaliwa |
| 4 | Oa utabarikiwa | Upendane na mkeo |

Marry to leave behind deception, of the heart to be deceived,
Marry someone who suits you, a woman who is praised,
Marry to bear/beget children, like you were born,
Marry and you will be blessed, love one another, you and your wife.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Oa aliye wa kheri | Mshikamane na dini |
| 6 | Oa yai la johari | Litie nuru nyumbani |
| 7 | Oa mdomo mzuri | Upendezao lisani |
| 8 | Oa uwe barakani | Upendane na mkeo |

Marry someone of good fortune, the two of you hold onto religion,
Marry an oval gem, that brings light to the home,
Marry a good mouth, that has a pleasing tongue,
Marry to be in blessing, love one another, you and your wife.

- | | | |
|----|------------------|--------------------|
| 9 | Oa mke wa Omani | Asoleta ya kufuja |
| 10 | Oa usioe duni | Anaeitwa kiroja |
| 11 | Oa alo na imani | Utakidhi yako haja |
| 12 | Oa kheri itakuja | Upendane na mkeo |

Marry a woman from Oman, who will not bring disturbance/uproar,
Marry, do not marry an inferior (woman), who is called an oddity,
Marry someone with faith, you will be granted your needs,
Marry and happiness will come, love one another, you and your wife.

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------|
| 13 | Oa mke wa sitara | Asiyependa mabaya |
| 14 | Oa mwanamke bora | Ataefuata njia |
| 15 | Oa usioe sura | Oa mzuri tabia |
| 16 | Oa mke kama joya | Upendane na mkeo |

Marry a woman of modesty, who does not like bad people,
Marry a superior woman, who will follow the path
Marry, do not marry a (pretty) face, marry a sound character,
Marry a woman like a joya,¹ love one another, you and your wife.

¹ *Joya* lit. 'white, spongy substance inside a coconut' see 5.1.3.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 17 | Oa usiwe muhuni | Roho ipate kutuwa |
| 18 | Oa mke mwenye dini | Mungu akikujalia |
| 19 | Oa utie nyumbani | Kheri ulotunukiwa |
| 20 | Oa ujue kuoa | Upendane na mkeo |

Marry not to be a vagabond, so the soul gets rest,
 Marry a woman who has religion, God will grant you,
 Marry to put at home, the happiness that has been given to you as a present,
 Marry and know to marry, love one another, you and your wife.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 21 | Oa uvishwe kilemba | Na joho la mahadhamu |
| 22 | Oa upate kuimba | Nyimbo za kheri na tamu |
| 23 | Oa nyumba ilo nyumba | Mchanganye na damu |
| 24 | Oa usijidhulumu | Upendane na mkeo |

Marry to be clothed in a turban, and a gold-embroidered joho,
 Marry to get to sing, songs of happiness and sweetness,
 Marry a house that is a house, so that you get to mix blood,
 Marry and do not oppress yourself, love one another, you and your wife.

B2 Leo Tumefurahika – Arbaini ‘Today We Are Happy – Arbaini’

Sheikh Bakathir

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Leo tumefurahika | Watu wote kwa yakini |
| 2 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 3 | Arbaini imefika | Toka kuja duniani |
| 4 | Awe mwana wa baraka | Awe na nyingi imani |

Today we are all truly happy,
Our hearts are merry, joy without example,
The arbaini has come, since coming to the world,
May he/she be a blessed child, may he/she have strong faith.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | Awe mwana maridhia | Na kupenda ikhwani |
| 6 | Akuwe pasi udhia | Na siha njema mwilini |
| 7 | Umwepushie balia | Na kula la nukusani |
| 8 | Rabbi atatukuzia | Kwa salama na amani |

May he/she be a polite child, and love (his/her) siblings,
May he/she grow up without difficulty, and with good health in the body,
Save him/her from calamity, and all deprivation,
The lord he/she will glorify, with tranquility and peace.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|----------------------|
| 9 | Awe mwana wa huruma | Wazee awathamini |
| 10 | Umpe yaliyomema | Ya dini na duniani |
| 11 | Awe mwana wa heshima | Na huruma za moyoni |
| 12 | Awe mcheshi daima | Na bashasha za usoni |

May he/she be a compassionate child, who values (his) elders,
Give him/her what is good, of religion and of the world,
May he/she be a respectful child, with a compassionate heart,
May he/she always be a pleasant person, with a jovial (expression) on the face.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 13 | Awe na mwendo mzuri | Aipende sana dini |
| 14 | Umwepushe na kila shari | Ya binadamu na jini |
| 15 | Awe mwana wa fakhari | Apendeze mitaani |
| 16 | Na shule awe hodari | Apasi mitihani |

May he/she have beautiful behaviour, may he/she love religion very much,
Protect him/her from every evil, of man or djinn,
May he/she be an honorable child, that pleases the quarter,
And in school may he/she be clever, may he/she pass the exams.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------|
| 17 | Apende wazee wake | Daima awathamini |
| 18 | Na wazazi wa wenzake | Awaheshimu yakini |
| 19 | Hasa mama na baba yake | Awepao miguuni |
| 20 | Bibi pia babu yake | Na ukoo wa nyumbani |

May he/she love his/her elders, always may he/she esteem them,
 And the parents of his/her companions, may he/she respect them truly,
 Especially his mother and father, may he/she be at (their) feet,
 Also his/her grandmother and grandfather, and the family at home.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 21 | Rabbi mtie imani | Awasisikize daima |
| 22 | Na kuwapenda moyoni | Rabbi kwa zako huruma |
| 23 | Umtie hifadhini | Na daima awe mwema |
| 24 | Umtunze rahamani | Dua tunawaomba |

Lord, put faith in him/her, may he/she always listen to them,
 And love them from the heart, Lord, for your compassion,
 Keep him/her in (your) protection and may he/she always be good/pious,
 Take care of him/her, Merciful One, we make a supplication for them.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 25 | Hapa tamma nafikia | Dua tunamuomba enjambement |
| 26 | Rabbi ipande mbinguni | Yatimie yote pia |
| 27 | Kwa uwezo wa manani | Mwaka atapotimia |
| 28 | Tutakutana mwakani | Mungu akitujalia |

Here I have reached the end, we make a supplication for him/her,
 Lord, it may reach the heavens, everything may be accomplished completely,
 With the power of the Beneficent, when he/she completes a year,
 We will meet next year, if God grants us.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|------------------|
| 29 | Kula ajae kwa shari | Waijua yake siri |
| 30 | Ivunje yake dhamiri | Asiweze kusimama |
| 31 | Kula ajae kwa shari | Wajua yake siri |
| 32 | Ivunje yake dhamiri | Asiweze kusimama |

Everybody who comes with evil, they know his secret,
 His intention may be broken, so that he cannot stand,
 Everybody who comes with evil, they know his secret,
 His intention may be broken, so that he cannot stand.

B3 Harusi 'Wedding'

By Sheikh Bakathir

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Leo tumefurahika | Watu wote kwa yakini |
| 2 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 3 | Kwa harusi ya baraka | Yenye kheri ya amani |
| 4 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

Today we are all truly happy,
Our hearts are merry, joy without example,
Because of the blessed wedding, the one with luck and peace,
May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Rabbi izidishe kheri | Harusi hii thamini |
| 6 | Ya ndugu ... | Vipenzi vyetu yakini |
| 7 | Na mambo yawe mazuri | Yasitawi mitaani |
| 8 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

Lord increase (their) luck, treasure this marriage,
Of our brother
May their affairs be good,
May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 9 | Dua tunawaombea | Kwa mola wetu manani |
| 10 | Mambo yatawanyokea | Pasiwe na nukusani |
| 11 | Akidi kujifungia | Na kuingia nyumbani |
| 12 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

We make dua for them, from our Lord, the Beneficient,
Their affairs will be straight, may there be no blemish,
In their wedding contract and going into the house,
May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 13 | Yaillahi ya Karimu | Tupe mema duniani |
| 14 | Na mambo yote kutimu | Pasiwe na nukusani |
| 15 | Harusi hii idumu | Haya na tufurahini |
| 16 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

Oh Allah, oh Generous, give us good things in this world,
And everything may be accomplished without blemish
May this marriage last, nad let us be happy about it,
May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 17 | Wamefanya jambo la Sunna | La Mtume I-amini |
| 18 | Rabbi wasikizana | Na kuishi kwa amani |
| 19 | Mungu awape? zijana | Washikamane na dini |
| 20 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

They have done a thing of the Sunna of the truthful Prophet,
 Lord, may they get on well and live in peace,
 May God give them children, may they hold on to their faith,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 21 | Watoto wawe wa kheri | Wazijue zote fani |
| 22 | Wawe wa mwendo mzuri | Na kupenda ikhiwani |
| 23 | Waepushe na kiburi | Na hasadi za moyoni |
| 24 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

May the children be of luck, may they know all the
 May they be of good demeanour, and love their brothers,
 May they be spared from arrogance and from jealousy of the heart,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|
| 25 | Rabbi mola yakwelea | Makusudi ya nyoyoni |
| 26 | Pasizuke la udhia | Mambo yawe wastani |
| 27 | Sote tuwe maridhia | Shime na tufurahini |
| 28 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

Lord, Protector, make plain to them the intentions of the heart,
 May there be no worry everything may be of standard,
 Let us all be content, and let us be happy,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 29 | Harusi jambo la kheri | sote twalifurahia |
| 30 | Watoto leo shuwari | Wamekwisha funga ndoa |
| 31 | Waishi wote vizuri | Kwa furaha na afiya |
| 32 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

A wedding is a lucky occasion, let us all be happy about it,
 The children today calmly, they have already tied the knot,
 May they live well, in happiness and good health,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--------------------|
| 33 | Ndoa hii ya halali | Leo imetimilia |
| 34 | Tumefurahi kikweli | Sote tunashangiria |
| 35 | Wapenzi hao wawili | Ndoani wameingia |
| 36 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

This lawful wedding, today has been completed,
 We are all truly happy, we celebrate,
 These two lovers have entered a marriage,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 37 | Wenyewe wamependana | Bila ya tabu na udhia |
| 38 | Mpendwa dada ... | Na ... kamzuia |

- 39 Tumefurahika sana Hongera tunawambia
 40 Harusi iwe ya kheri Ya furaha na amani

They themselves love each other, without problem or worry,
 The beloved sister ..., and ... has held her,
 We are very happy, and congratulate them,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- 41 Awe bibi awe bwana Mapenzi yawe sawia
 42 Kwa usiku na mchana Mapenzi kuwazidia
 43 Nyumbani wakae vyema Waishi na kutulia
 44 Harusi iwe ya kheri Ya furaha na amani

May they be husband and wife, the love may be equal,
 At night and daytime, may their love increase,
 May they live well at home, may they live and be at calm,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- 45 Nyumba ijae baraka Tunakuomba jalia
 46 Wazidi kunawirika Maisha kuwang'aria
 47 Waepushie mashaka Maisha kufurahia
 48 Harusi iwe ya kheri Ya furaha na amani

The home may be filled with blessings, we ask you, oh Granter,
 May they increase to glow, life shine upon them,
 Keep them away from problems, (so that) life is enjoyable,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- 49 Yarabbi wape kizazi Chema chenye manufaa
 50 Wafae wao wazazi Pia na sote jamia
 51 Tunakuomba Mwenyezi Dua yetu ipokea
 52 Harusi iwe ya kheri Ya furaha na amani

Oh Lord, give them good offspring, that will benefit them,
 May they [the children] befit their parents, and the whole community,
 We ask you Almighty, to accept our prayer,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- 53 Tunakuomba wadudi Rabbi unatusikia
 54 Walinde na mahasidi Wao wasije usendea
 55 Pamoja na mahasidi Wote wapoteze njia
 56 Harusi iwe ya kheri Ya furaha na amani

We ask you, Wadud, Lord you hear us,
 Protect them from the envious, so that they may no ...
 Together with the envious, all may loose their way,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--------------------|
| 57 | Tunakuomba jalali | Irefushe hii ndoa |
| 58 | Dua iwe makubuli | Uwalinde na mabaya |
| 59 | Dada ... kikweli | Na ... kutulia |
| 60 | Harusi iwe ya kheri | Ya furaha na amani |

We ask you, Majestic, lengthen this marriage,
 May the prayer be fulfilled, protect them from the bad,
 Sister ... truly, and ... may they settle down,
 May the marriage be of luck, of happiness and peace.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| 61 | Amina rabbi amina | Amina rabbi amina |
| 62 | Amina rabbi amina | Amina rabbi amina |
| 63 | Amina rabbi amina | Ya samiu ya alima |
| 64 | Amina rabbi amina | Dua tutakabalia |

Amen, Lord, amen, Amen, Lord, amen,
 Amen, Lord, amen, Amen, Lord, amen,
 Amen, Lord, amen, oh All-hearing, oh All-knowing,
 Amen, Lord, amen, we will bring forth a prayer.

B4 Arusana 'Our Bride'

Ustadh Sele Abbas Ibrahim

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Harusi ya kheri | Iwe ya amani |
| 2 | Tunafurahia | Sote kwa yakini |

A marriage of luck, may it be peaceful,
We are happy, truly all of us.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| 3 | Tunafurahia | Harusi jamili |
| 4 | Yake dada ... | Leo kaolewa |

We are happy about the beautiful wedding,
Of sister ... She got married today.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| 5 | Tunashangiria | Ndoa ya halali |
| 6 | Yake kaka ... | Leo ameo |

We are celebrating the lawful marriage,
Of brother... He got married today.

- | | | |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| 7 | Tunampongeza | Bwana harusi |
| 8 | Na bibi harusi | Kwa kufunga ndoa |

We congratulate the groom,
And the bride, on tying the knot.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------|
| 9 | Tunawatakia | Maisha mazuri |
| 10 | Na yenye baraka | Na kunawirika |

We wish them a good life,
A blessed and radiant life.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------------|
| 11 | Tunawaombea | Kwa mola jalali |
| 12 | Ndoa ya kudumu | Na yenye baraka |

We pray for them to the Glorious Lord,
(For) a lasting and blessed marriage.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------|
| 13 | Tunawapongeza | Wazazi wao |
| 14 | Kwa malezi mema | Ya watoto wao |

We congratulate their parents,
On the sound upbringing of their children.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------------|
| 15 | Na tufurahie | Sote kwa pamoja |
| 16 | Na tushangirie | Kwa vigelegele |

Let us all be happy together,
Let us all celebrate with ululations.

B5 Mzuri Sana 'Very Beautiful'

- | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Mzuri sana nabia | Wallahi 'meteuliwa |
| 2 | Nuru zilituenea | Hapo alipozaliwa |

Very beautiful is the Prophet, By God he has been chosen,
Light has pervaded us, when he was born.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Mtume hana mithali | Amepambwa kweli kweli |
| 4 | Mweupe uso jamili | Nasaba yake ni ali |

The Messenger has no comparison, he is truly, truly adorned,
A beautiful fair face, his lineage is high.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Kama ua lawaridi | Tumwa wetu maridadi |
| 6 | Bure leo mahasidi | Memo hifadhi wadudi |

Like a rose flower, Our elegant Prophet,
The enviers without success, he is protected by the Most Loving.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| 7 | Akiinua khatuwa | Hutupa mbele kifua |
| 8 | Shujaa wa sawasawa | Hayuko asomjua |

When he sets forth a step, he puts forth his chest,
He is a real hero, there is no one who does not know him.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|----------------------|
| 9 | Ni ajabu sikizeni | Sifa za wetu amini |
| 10 | Nasi sote ikhwani | Tumeshika kamba moja |

They are miracles, listen well, the traits of our Amin,
And we are all brothers, we hold on to a single rope.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 11 | Nywele yake ni nyeusi | Si za nyumbu si farasi |
| 12 | Laini zisizo kiasi | Harufu yake amini |

His hair is black, it is not like that of a gnu nor that of a horse,
It is soft without measure, the scent of the Amin.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 13 | Sala njema na salamu | Zimshukie Hashimu |
| 14 | Na sahabaze kiramu | Na Isilamu pamoja |

Blessings and peace, may descend upon the Hashim,
And his honourable companions, and Muslims with them.

B6 Kaghani 'He Sung'

- | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Kaghani mwimbaji | Wa msafara sikiza |
| 2 | Kwa jina la taji | La Mtume mpendeza |
| 3 | Ngamia mwendaji | Maumbile yakicheza |
| 4 | Kwa ulevi wake | Kutajiwa mfaraji |

A travelling singer has sung, listen,
In the name of the crown, of the beloved Prophet,
Riding on a camel, the limbs? Dancing
With his intoxication, to be named the consoler.

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 5 | Mtume |
| 6 | Rasuli |
| 7 | Habibi |

Sent
Prophet
Beloved

- | | | |
|----|------------------|------------------------|
| 8 | Litazame quba | Lenye rangi ya kibichi |
| 9 | Mtume swahiba | Yumo humu hajifichi |
| 10 | Nuru ya haiba | Anga lake la hila nchi |
| 11 | Liloondosha giza | likatufaraji |

Look at the grave/ mausoleum, of the fresh colour,
The Prophet friend, is inside it he does not hide,
The light of the charisma, his light of this country
That dismissed darkness, that has brought us relief.

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|----|-----------------|----------------------|
| 12 | Yambie nafsi | Ondoka tena zungumza |
| 13 | Itoke upesi | Iwe na kujiliwaza |
| 14 | Isitie hisi | Hapana wa kukataza |
| 15 | Kwa muhibu wako | Nena uwalotaraji |

Tell the self/soul, Go away again, talk
It may go away fast, so that it may soothe itself,
It shall not suspect, there is nothing to refuse,
From your beloved, Say what you hope for.

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|----|-----------------|---------------------|
| 16 | Mtume wa Mungu | Bwana wa viumbe pia |
| 17 | Mtukufu tangu | Na vyeo vilotimia |
| 18 | Daraja kichungu | Mola amemjazia |
| 19 | Kila la ubora | Ampewa mfaraji |

God's Prophet, the Master of all creatures,
An honourable person since, and with accomplished ranks,
Myriad dignities, God has bestowed on him,
Every superiority, he was given, the consoler

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|----------------------|
| 20 | Ana jaha kubwa | Na mamboye matukufu |
| 21 | Na cheo kikubwa | Cha nguvu kitakatifu |
| 22 | Bwana mwenye sifa | Zake ukamilifu |
| 23 | Kila sifa njema | Ampewa mfaraji |

He has great glory, and his issues are hallowed,
And his standing has sacred strength,
He is a gentleman with perfect character
Every good trait, he has been given, the Consoler.

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|----|-----------------|----------------------|
| 24 | Lau tungekwenda | Madina kwa siku zote |
| 25 | Bila ya kupanda | Ngamia au chochote |
| 26 | Ila twampenda | Mtume dunia yote |
| 27 | Ingali tupasa | Kufika kwa mfaraji |

If only we could go to Madina every day
Without mounting a camel or other
Only we love the Prophet of the whole world
It would befit us to reach the Consoler.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------------------|
| 28 | Lautwafanza | Kila mara maulidi |
| 29 | Yakumtukuza | Tumwa wetu Muhammadi |
| 30 | Muondosha giza | Mpenzi wa mola wadudi |
| 31 | Ingali tupasa | Kumsifu mfaraji |

Every time we organise a maulidi
To praise/bless Our Prophet Muhammd
The remover of darkness, the darling of the Loving God
It would befit us to praise the Consoler.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|------------------------|
| 32 | Mola mchunguzi | Mpelekee rehema |
| 33 | Tumwa muokozi | Nyakati zote daima |
| 34 | Zende wazi wazi | Kwa Mtume wetu hashima |
| 35 | Ataesimama | Kutuvusha mfaraji |

Lord Observer send mercy upon
The Prophet, the rescuer, in all times forever
May he go openly to our honourable Prophet
Who will stand erect to convey us across, the Consoler.

- | | | |
|----|---------------|--------------------|
| 36 | Ali na sahaba | kwa wote wapeke |
| 37 | Na waloibeba | Haki kufata sharia |
| 38 | Tunaka toba | Mtume tusimamia |
| 39 | Kuombea kwako | Mola atatufaraji |

Upon his relatives and followers, upon all of them
And upon those who carry the right to follow the sharia
We ask for forgiveness, Prophet stand up for us
Your praying for (us) the Lord will comfort us.

B7 Tumsifu 'Let Us Praise'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Tumsifu habibuna | Kwa sifa zilofanana |
| 2 | Yeye ndie mwenye maana | Hiyo siku tusojuana |
| 3 | Tutapozindukana | Jinsi za kila aina |
| 4 | Uzee hapo hapana | Ila wote kuwa vijana |

Let us praise our beloved, with praises that are fitting,
 He is indeed the meaningful one, on the day we will not know each other,
 When we will come to our senses, people of all types,
 There will be no old age, only everybody will be youthful.

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|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Yaasini maulana | Wa mwanzo shaafiina |
| 6 | Pwekee Sayyidina | Muokozi wa Rabbana |
| 7 | Wako wapi wale mabwana | Walokuwa wakijiona |
| 8 | Siku hiyo mbele ya bwana | Kila mtu hana maana |

(He is) Yasin, our Lord, the first, our intercessor
 Only him, our Sayyid, the Lords rescuer,
 Where are those men, who used to be conceited/proud,
 That day in front of the Master, every human has no meaning.

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|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9 | Hukumu tutazona | Hapana la uwongo tena |
| 10 | Wabaya watajiona | Malipo ya kila aina |
| 11 | Hatufanyi yenye maana | Akhera tutazozana |
| 12 | Kwa moto wa Subuhana | Hukujia kila aina |

We will see the judgements, there is no dishonesty any more,
 The bad ones will see for themselves the payments of all kinds,
 We do not do meaningful deeds, in the we will nag at each other
 Because of the fire of the Glorious approaching you from all around.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 13 | Adhabu zisofanana | Tusifikiri tutaonana |
| 14 | Huyu bilisi asomaana | Utwepushe ya rabbana |
| 15 | Na jamii muslimina | Shetwani tutamuona |
| 16 | Ewe bwana wa mabwana | Tusitiri aibuna (arabism) |

Punishments that are not , we should not think we'll meet again,
 This devil without meaning, Oh Lord
 And all Muslims we will see the devil
 Oh Master of Masters, conceal our shame.

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|----|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 17 | Na sala zinajazana | Kwa mtume wetu I-amini |
| 18 | Mpaka siye jamiina | Utupe Khusnul-yakini |
| 19 | Yaillahi ya Rabbana | Twakuomba Subhana |
| 20 | Kwa baraka za nabiina | Waimamil- mur-salina |

An the prayers are crammed in for you Prophet the reliable,
 Until all of us give us the fort/beauty of truth,
 Oh Allah, Oh Lord, We ask you, the Glorious
 For the blessings of the Prophet, and the Imam of the mursalin

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 21 | Yaillahi ya rabbana | Twakuomba Subuhana |
| 22 | Kwa baraka za nabiina | Waimamil- mur-salina |
| 23 | Wallahi usonekana | Utukubalie duana |
| 24 | Tena sote ikhiwana | Ututie katika I-janah |

Oh Allah, Oh Lord, We ask you, the Glorious
 For the blessings of the Prophet, and the Imam of the mursalin
 By God grant us our supplications
 And all us brothers, put us into Paradise.

B8 Rabbi Peka Sala 'Lord, Send Blessings'

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|---|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Rabbi peka sala | Na salamu pia |
| 2 | Zende kwa Rasula | Alokurashia |
| 3 | Sahaba na ala | Na walofatia |

Lord send blessings, and peace too,
May they go to the Messenger, of the Quraish,
The companions and relatives, and those who followed.

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|---|----------------|---------------|
| 4 | Sifa za habibu | Hazina kifani |
| 5 | Kamsifu rabbu | Mola Rahamani |
| 6 | Katika kitabu | Chake Qurani |

The traits of the beloved, have no comparison,
The Lord has praised him, the Merciful Lord,
In his book the Qur'an.

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|---|------------------|----------------|
| 7 | Ni yupi Muongofu | Kama Hashimia |
| 8 | Mwenye utukufu | Ulotimilia |
| 9 | Na utakatifu | Na njema tabia |

Who is a Rescuer like the Hashim
With majesty that is perfect
And holiness and good character.

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|----|-----------------|--------------|
| 10 | Kula la faghari | Kajikusanyia |
| 11 | Yeye ndie duri | Ukimwangalia |
| 12 | Yake jauhari | Mianga hunea |

Every glory, he has assembled in himself
He is indeed a circle, if you look at him,
His jewel, spreads lights.

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|----|----------------|----------------|
| 13 | Ndie lulu | Alikiapo natia |
| 14 | Asiye mithali | Akhera Dunia |
| 15 | Na mola jalali | Alikitwambia |

He is indeed a pearl,
Without comparion, in the Hereafter and this World,
And the majestic Lord has told us so.

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|----|-----------------|--------------|
| 16 | Hapana ajabu | Tukizingatia |
| 17 | Wino wa dhahabu | Tukizandikia |
| 18 | Sifa za Habibu | Tukizisika |

There is no wonder, when we ponder,
 In golden ink, when we write them
 The traits of the beloved, when we hear them

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|----|---------------|------------------|
| 19 | Alotwahirika | Kwa tohara ghaya |
| 20 | Sana Kaumbika | Aloshinda pia |
| 21 | Mungu Kamueka | Ni tumwa nabia |

The one who is purified with utmost purity,
 Who is created, better than everyone else,
 For whom God has made a place, it is the Prophet.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|---------------|
| 22 | Sala na Salamu | Zikimshukia |
| 23 | Wetu muadhamu | Na kumsalia |
| 24 | Ali akiramu | Na sahaba pia |

Blessings and peace, be upon him,
 Our Exalted and bless,
 The noble relatives and the companions too.

B9 Rabbi Mshushize Sala 'Lord Send Blessings Upon Him'

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|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Rabbi Mshushize Sala | Mtume na wake ala |
| 2 | Na sahabaze jumla | Na salamu zikishuka |

Lord send blessings, on the Prophet and his family,
And all his followers, and peace be upon them.

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|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| 3 | Dhahiri imefunuka | Mtume wetu hakika |
| 4 | Ni mwezi usioshaka | Mbinguni unawirika |

It has been revealed clearly, our true Prophet
He is the moon without doubt, that shines in the sky.

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|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Sifa zake twatamani | Kwa watu kuzibaini |
| 6 | Ila hazina kifani | Haziwezi kwandikika |

We wish for his traits, to be recognized by everyone,
Only they have no equal, they cannot be written down.

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|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 7 | Harufu yake baridi | Si ya misiki si udi |
| 8 | Lakini namba huzidi | Hapo ikitawanyika |

His cold scent, it is neither musk nor aloe wood,
But its intensity increases, when it disperses.

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|----|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 9 | Turehemu ya rahimu | Kwa jamii yalomema |
| 10 | Na dhambi tulozichuma | Ziwe ni za kufutika |

Have mercy on us, oh Merciful, for everything that is good,
And the sins that we have collected, may be erased.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------|
| 11 | Kwa Hassani na Husseni | Vipenzi vyake amini |
| 12 | Hapo twataka amani | Na dua twaitamka |

For Hassan and Hussein, the darlings of the Peaceful,
We want peace for them, and we utter a prayer.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 13 | Twaomba yako shufaa | Na kuokoka na fazaha |
| 14 | Na kula la manufaa | Kwa mola wetu twataka |

We ask for your healing, and to be rescued from disgrace,
And for all that is useful, from our Lord we request it.

B10 Ewe Tumwa 'Oh, Messenger'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Ewe Tumwa Salamu alayka | Ewe mwema ulosifika |
| 2 | Johari ilo nadhifika | Na wazazi wako wema |

Oh your Prophet, peace be upon you, the Good who is praised,
A jewel that is clean, and your good parents.

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|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 3 | Wazazi wako kiramu | Imepita nuru tamu |
| 4 | Ni hiyo yako Hashimu | Katika vipaji vyema |

Your honourable parents, a sweet light has passed,
It is indeed yours, Hashim, upon the good foreheads.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | Na mwezi ulipasuka | Ikawa kugawanyika |
| 6 | Pande mbili kwa hakika | Mbele ya Tumwa karimu |

And the moon split, it became torn apart,
In two pieces truly, before the generous Messenger.

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|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 7 | Karimu uso mithali | Na sifa zako kamili |
| 8 | Wallahi nanena kweli | Sifa zako zote njema |

You are generous without comparison, and all your traits,
By God I say the truth, all your traits are good.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 9 | Sote twataraji kwako | Tupate baraka zako |
| 10 | Twaomba shufaa kwako | Tushufaiye Hashima |

All of us we hope from you, to get your blessings,
We ask for your intercession, intercede for us, Hashim.

B11 Tumwa Mkaramu ‘The Generous Prophet’ (cf. K1, Z4, T4)

Sheikh Bakathir

- 1 Yā rabbi ṣallī ‘alā Muḥammad
- 2 Yā rabbi ṣalli ‘alāyhi wa sallim
- 3 Al-salāmun ‘alāyh
- 4 Al-ṣalātun ‘alāyh

Oh Lord, pray upon Muhammad
 Oh Lord, send a prayer upon him and peace
 Peace (be) upon him
 Prayer (be) upon him

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| 5 | Tumwa Mkaramu | Ameshadhihiri |
| 6 | Nuru ya dhalamu | Khairul-bashari |
| 7 | Hatozawa Bwana | Mfano rasuli |
| 8 | Twampenda sana | Abal- Batuli |

The Generous Prophet has been revealed
 The light in the darkness, the best of mankind
 No master/man will be born, like the Prophet
 We love him so much, the father of the Virgin

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|
| 9 | Zilifurahika | Jamii kauni |
| 10 | Alipozaliwa | Bani Adinani |
| 11 | Insi na majini | Wote walisema |
| 12 | Sote furahani | Kuzawa Hashima |

They were overjoyed, the whole tribe
 When he was born, the Bani Adinan
 Humans and jinns, all said
 We are all in joy over the the Honourable One’s birth

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|----------------|
| 13 | Alizawa Makka | Mji wa sharafu |
| 14 | Nchi ya baraka | ilo maarufu |
| 15 | Nyota zilizimwa | Nuru ikawaka |
| 16 | Kafa ya wanyama | waliotamka |

He wa born in Mecca, the city of the noble
 The blessed land, that it famous
 The stars were extinguished, Light shone
 The entirety of animals who uttered...

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|
| 17 | Maneno mazuri | Fasihi kalamu |
| 18 | Walikibashiri | Na kutabasamu |
| 19 | Tumwa kazaliwa | Twaiban daina |
| 20 | Wanja ametiwa | Machoni yakina |

... Beautiful words, clear speech
 They brought the news, and smiled
 The Prophet is born, forever good,
 He has put antimony on his eyes, verily.

21	Tena kasafika	Makh-tuasuri
22	Amenadhifika	Kushinda johari
23	Tumwa ni mzuri	Umbo na twabia
24	Jashole ambari	Rihi misikia

Also he is pure, the Chosen,²
 He is clean, better than a jewel,
 The Prophet is beautiful, his body and character,
 His sweat is ambergris, a perfumed aroma.

25	Yeye ndiye kamba	Isiyokatika
26	Yeye ndiye Mwamba	Usiyovunjika
27	Rabbi tukirimu	Kwa sifa zake
28	Utupe elimu	Na khuluka zake

He is indeed a rope, that does not break
 He is indeed a coral rock, that does not break
 Lord, give us the gift of his traits,
 Give us education and his character

² *Mukhtari* instead of *makhtuasuri* is the only sensible explanation here. This is also supported by Omar Babu (pers. comm. 26.05.2012).

B12 Awali 'First'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Awali kuanza kwangu | Kumtaja mola wangu |
| 2 | Illahi Mwenyezi Mungu | tupe kila yalomema |
| 3 | Sasa tutege sikio | tusikie twambiwayo |
| 4 | Nayo hayo nitajayo | Maneno yake alima |

First I begin with, mentioning my Lord,
 Allah the Almighty God, give us all that is good.
 Now we shall prepare to hear, may we hear what we are told,
 And that is what I say, the words of the All-knowing.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Maneno yake maneno | Mazuri yasomfano |
| 6 | Na yenye nafuu mno | Duniani na Kiama |
| 7 | Kaletewa l-amini | Na mola wetu manani |
| 8 | Kwenye hii Qur-ani | Kitabu cha kila jema |

His words are beautiful words without comparison
 And with excessive advantage, in this world and the day of judgement,
 The Amin has been brought by our beneficent Lord,
 In this Qur'an, the book of every Good.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|----------------------|
| 9 | Basi lazima tufate | Sisi Isilamu sote |
| 10 | Kwa lolote na popote | Pasina chembe kuliwa |
| 11 | Isilamu jambo lake | Kumtii Mola wake |
| 12 | Kwa zote amri zake | Kwani zote za Salama |

Accordingly, we must follow, all us Muslims,
 Everything and everywhere, without being diminished by a minute thing,
 A muslims thing is, to obey his Lord
 In all his orders, as they are all of salvation.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------------------|
| 13 | Katuhawi Isilamu | Anoambiwa khatima |
| 14 | Asomtii Rahimu | Hadi siku ya Kiama |
| 15 | Siku hiyo watakata | Wale waliofuata |
| 16 | Bila kupata matata | Hiyo Jannatu naima |

What the seal (of the Prophets) was told,
 Whoever does not obey the Exceedingly Merciful, until the day of Judgment,
 On this day they will get, those who followed,
 Without difficulty, the splendid Paradise.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 17 | Hiyo Jannatu Naimu | Watangia Isilamu |
| 18 | Walofuata kwa timamu | Maneno yake alima |
| 19 | Katika maneno yake | Yalolazima tufate |
| 20 | Tuongoke tuongoke | Hayo nitayoyasema |

This splendid Paradise, those Muslims will enter it,
 Who folled the words of the Omniscient with a calm (mind).
 Among His words are those that are obligatory for us to follow,
 Let us be well taught, let us be well taught, this is what I have to say.

21	Isilamu wapendane	Mema wapendeleane
22	Siyo huyu mgombane	Huyu mcheke kwa wema
23	Isilamu ni wamoja	Wote ni kitu kimoja
24	Nasema hayo kwa hoja	Alizotowa Karima

Muslims shall love one another, and wish good things for teach other,
 Not with this one quarrel and with this smile in goodness,
 All Muslims are one, they are all one thing,
 I say this with on account of what the Generous has prescribed.

B13 Nyoyo 'Hearts'

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|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Nyoyo zimefurahika | Kwa kuzaliwa Nabia |
| 2 | Ulimwengu unachekeka | Kwa Nuru kutuenea |

The hearts are happy, about the birth of the Prophet,
The world laughs, with the light pervading us.

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|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| 3 | Ilizagaa mianga | Bwana alipodhihiri |
| 4 | Aliondosha ujinga | Elimu kutukhubiri |
| 5 | Kasafisha ya kupinga | Akaleta kula kheri |

Lights were shining when the Master appeared,
He dismissed ignorance by teaching us knowledge,
He cleared away all opposition, he brought all blessedness.

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|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 6 | Alikamilika mwendo | Mzuri sana nabia |
| 7 | Akenda hana vishindo | Mpole akikujia |
| 8 | Moyo hauna mafundo | Kwa watu maridhia |

He had perfect ways, The Prophet was very beautiful/good,
He has no sudden outbursts, he was calm when he would come to you,
His heart has no knots, with people (he is) agreeable.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|------------------------|
| 9 | Ni wa mwanzo alo mwema | Kwa kuumbwa na Rabbana |
| 10 | Ni wa mwisho khatima | Mtume hakuna tena |
| 11 | Angenena wa kusema | Muwongo hana maana |

He is the first, who is good, to be created by our Lord,
He is the last, the seal, there will not be another Prophet,
When he has spoken, then a liar is not considered.

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|----|----------------------|----------------------|
| 12 | Walojaribu ni wengi | Walotaka kuhusudu |
| 13 | Wakafanya na magengi | Ya chini kama wadudu |
| 14 | Umevunjika mtungi | Wote hao mar-dudu |

Those who tried are many, who wanted to be jealous,
And they even committed lowly, like vermin,
The earthen pitcher is broken, all of them are refuted.

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|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 15 | Sala ya Mola karimu | Yende kwa wake nabia |
| 16 | Na sahaba maalimu | Pamoja na ala pia |
| 17 | Muda wa watu Qaumu | Wakumsifu hashimia |

The Blessings of the Generous Lord, may go to His Prophet
And to the knowledgeable companions, together with all his relatives,
This is the time for people to stand up praising the Hashim.

B14 Mtume Wetu Hashimu 'Our Prophet, The Hashim'

Sheikh Saleh al-Farsy

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|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Mtume wetu Hashimu | Alikuwa muadhamu |
| 2 | Mbele ya Mola Karimu | Kuliko kila nabia |
| 3 | Kakamilika namna | Mfano wake hakuna |
| 4 | Kahodhi kila aina | Ya utukufu nabia |

Our Prophet the Hashim, was the most exalted,
In front of our Bountiful Lord, among all the prophets,
He is perfect in every sense, he has no example/comparison,
He posses every kind of glory, the Prophet.

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|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Umbo lake timilifu | Tabia zake tukufu |
| 6 | Katu hakuna muongofu | Kushinda huyo nabia |
| 7 | Utadhani kajumba | Namna alivyopambwa |
| 8 | Si mnene si mwembamba | Kakamilika nabia |

His shape is perfect, his character is glorious,
Never will there be a rescuer/intercessor better than this Prophet.
You would think he had created himself, such was he adorned,
He is not fat nor thin, the Prophet is perfect.

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|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9 | Uso wake mdawari | Unapendeza mzuri |
| 10 | Yashinda mwezi kamari | Nuru ya tumwa nabia |
| 11 | Pua juu umepanda | Nyusi vyema zimepinda |
| 12 | Kope nyingi zimetanda | kwenye macho ya nabia |

His face is round, it is beautiful and attractive,
It beats the full moon, the light of the Prophet.
(His) nose goes up steeply, his eyebrows arch nicely,
Thick lashes are spread out on the eyes of the Prophet

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|----|------------------------|----------------------|
| 13 | Macho meupe makubwa | Na wekundu haba haba |
| 14 | Ili kuzidi haiba | Na kupendeza nabia |
| 15 | Meno yake yana mwanga | Utadhani yamefanywa |
| 16 | Wasitwani chake kinywa | Mzuri mno nabia |

Big white eyes and very little redness,
In order to increase the beauty of appearance and character, and attractiveness
of the Prophet,
His teeth give light, you would think they have been manufactured,
Medium is his mouth, the Prophet is beautiful beyond bounds.

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 17 | Na nywele nyeusi sana | Vizuri akizichana |
| 18 | Na ndezu akizipuna | Mrembo kweli nabia |

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|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 19 | Rangi yake ni mweupe | Na si mweupe pepe |
| 20 | Alikuwa na Weupe | Wenye wekundu nabia |

His hair is dark black when he combs it nicely,
 And when he smoothes his beard with his palms, the Prophet is truly beautiful,
 His colour is white, and it is not a light white,
 The Prophet was of a whiteness, that had some redness to it.

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|----|--------------------|---------------------|
| 21 | Nini niseme jamani | Hata panenwe fulani |
| 22 | Vizuri kazibaini | Sifa ya wetu nabia |
| 23 | Ila twataka baraka | Zitajie kwa haraka |
| 24 | Kwa kumsifu mmaka | Mtume wetu nabia |

What should I say, my friends, to even speak of a certain one,
 They are well understood, the praises of our Prophet,
 All we want is blessings, (his praises) be named quickly,
 To praise the Meccan, Our Prophet.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 25 | Rabbi mola msalie | Rehema zimshukie |
| 26 | Na jaha Mzidishie | Kipenzi chako Nabia |
| 27 | Na Ali zake wa kheri | Khususu Abubakari |
| 28 | Athumani na Omaari | Ali nduguye nabia |

Oh Lord, oh, Protector, bless him, send your compassion upon him,
 And increase his prosperity, of your darling Prophet,
 And his blessed relative, especially Abubakar,
 Ohtman and Omar, Ali the Prophet's cousin.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 29 | Na Ali zake wa kheri | Khususu Abubakari |
| 30 | Athumani na Omaari | Ali nduguye nabia |
| 31 | Nasi tupe yalomema | Leo na Kesho kiama |
| 32 | Sote tupate Salama | Kwa jaha yako nabia |

And his blessed relative, especially Abubakar,
 Ohtman and Omar, Ali the Prophet's cousin.
 And give us what is good, today and tomorrow on the Day of Judgement,
 So that we may all attain peace, by your glory, Prophet.

B15 Salatu Rabbi 'The Lord's Blessings'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Salatu Rabbi | Alal-Habibi |
| 2 | Miski watibi | Nabii Muhammad |
| 3 | Tumsifu Mtume | Badru Tamani |
| 4 | Nuru ya dhalami | |

The Lord's blessings on the Beloved
Musk and sandalwood, the Prophet Muhammad,
Let us praise the Prophet, the attractive, hoped for moon,
The light in the darkness.

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|---|-----------------|----------------|
| 5 | Nuru alipewa | Sayyidi Rasuwa |
| 6 | Yalizidi jua | Nabii Muhammad |
| 7 | Mweupe wajihi | Twaiba tiri |
| 8 | Twiba kula jini | |

He was given a light, the Sayyid Messenger,
That was greater than the sun's, the Prophet Muhammad,
His face was white, good and round,
A remedy for every wickedness.

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|----|----------------|-------------------|
| 9 | Kazaliwa Makka | Bwana wetu Bwana |
| 10 | Kapata Utume | Ar-baini na sanah |
| 11 | Hakuzawa Bwana | Kama shafiina |
| 12 | Tumpende sana | |

He was born at Mecca, the Master, our Master,
He got prophethood when he was forty years old,
No man was born like out interceder,
We shall love him very much.

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|----|------------------|-----------------|
| 13 | Wake Tumwa | Yeye pweke |
| 14 | Wa sahaba zake | Nabii Muhammad |
| 15 | Alipanda mbingu | Saba Bwana wetu |
| 16 | Akenda kwa Mungu | |

His Messenger, the only one,
Of his companions, the Prophet Muhammad,
He ascended the seven heavens, our Master,
And went to God.

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|----|-----------------|----------------|
| 17 | Kapita Hijabu | Pasina taabu |
| 18 | Kaambiwa karibu | Nabii Muhammad |
| 19 | Kaekewa kiti | na bijabaruti |
| 20 | Tumwa Aliketi | |

He passed the barrier without problems,
 He was told 'Welcome, Prophet Muhammad,'
 A chair was brought for him by the Divine Power,³
 The Messenger sat down.

21	Karibu Nabia	Nimekuumbia
22	Pepo na Dunia	Nabii Muhammad
23	Ulimwengu wako	Na umati wako
24	Na shifaa zako	

Welcome, Prophet, I created for you,
 Paradise and the world, Prophet Muhammad,
 Your world and your umma,
 And your intercessions.

25	Haudhi Hidaya	Na kautharia
26	Nimekuumbia	Nabii Muhammad
27	Jannat Naima	Na matunda tamu
28	Yako Muadhamu	

A basin of guidance and Kawthar,⁴
 I created for you, Prophet Muhammad,
 Splendid Paradise and sweet fruits,
 For you, Exalted.

29	Ya Firdausi	Pepo na Libasi
30	Zisiyokiasi	Nabii Muhammad
31	Zote jamiina	Ziumbe zijana
32	Kama Wewe sina	

Of heavenly Paradise⁵, apparel,
 Without limit, Prophet Muhammad,
 All creatures together,
 Like you there is none.

33	Sala na salamu	Zimshukie
34	Hashimu	Nabii Muhammad
35	Yeye wa Mwanzo	Ndie wa Mwisho
36	Ali na sahaba	

Peace and blessings, may descend upon,
 The Hashim, the Prophet Muhammad,

³ I am grateful to Omar Babu for help with this line.

⁴ 'Abundance,' also the name of a river in Paradise.

⁵ (Jannat al-) Firdaws: 'The highest Garden of Paradise' is the highest level of Paradise (Qur'an 18:107 and 23:11).

He is indeed the First and the Last,
(And upon) his relatives and companions.

37	Twataka shufaa	Kwa Mwenye Shufaa
38	Muombezi nani	Nabii Muhammad
39	Hapana mwengine	Wakuyakabili
40	Ila wahida rasuli	

We ask for intercession from the one who intercedes,
Who is the suppliant? The Prophet Muhammad,
There is no one else to put them (wishes) forward,
Except the Messenger alone.

B16 Karibu Mtukufu Ramadhan 'Welcome, Holy Month of Ramadhan'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Karibu Mtukufu | Ramadhan |
| 2 | Ewe Mwezi | Wa saada na ibada |

Welcome, blessed month of Ramadan
Oh you month of happiness and worship.

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|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 3 | Nyoyo zimefurahika | Kufika kwa Ramadhan |
| 4 | Ewe Mwezi | Wa Baraka na Imani |

The hearts are merry, as Ramadan has come,
Oh you month of blessings and faith.

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|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Shime tujitahidi | Tujikaze ikhiwani |
| 6 | Tupate wetu muradi | Kwa mola wetu karimu |

Let us strive, let us be firm with ourselves, brothers,
In order to get the approval of our Bountiful Lord.

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|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| 7 | Yalomema tuyashike | Tusimfate sheitwani |
| 8 | Tufunge kwa nguzo zake | Tusitamani |

Let us hold on to what is good, let us not follow the devil,
Let us fast for (it is one) of His pillars, let us not be greedy/lust.

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 9 | Tujizuie na kula | Na kutamani moyoni |
| 10 | Tusiwacheneni na Sala | Asubuhi na Jioni |

Let us refrain from eating, and the desires of the heart,
Nor let us stop prayer, in the mornings and afternoons.

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|----|---------------------|---------------------|
| 11 | Kufunga bila kusali | Imetukataza dini |
| 12 | Huna thawabu kamili | Za kufunga Ramadhan |

To fast without praying, is not allowed in religion,
(If you fast without praying) You have no complete reward of fasting during
Ramadan.

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|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 13 | Huu Mwezi wa Baraka | Ni katika kila Mwaka |
| 14 | Ndio Mwezi uloshuka | Kitabu cha Qur-ani |

This is the Blessed Month, that occurs every year,
It is indeed the month, during which the Book of the Qur'an revealed.

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 15 | Rabbi kwa baraka zake | Twakuomba Rahamani |
| 16 | Tusaidie waja wako | Kuifunga Ramadhani |

Lord, by your blessings we ask you, oh Merciful,
To help us, your slaves, to fast during Ramadan.

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|----|------------------|---------------------|
| 17 | Neema tuzidishie | Ituennee Nchini |
| 18 | Tuzidishie Afia | Twakuomba ya Manani |

Bounty increase us, that is may spread out in the whole country,
Increase our health, We implore you, oh Gracious.

B17 Furaha ya Iddi 'Happiness of Eid'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Furaha leo imefika | Shime Tufurahini |
| 2 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 3 | Neema imetufika | Ienee visiwani |
| 4 | Sikukuu ya Baraka | Yenye kheri na Amani |

Joy has reached today, let us be joyful!
Our hearts are merry with the joy that has no equal,
Bounty has reached us, may it spread on the islands,
A blessed holiday, of happiness and peace.

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|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | Leo tumefurahika | Sote tulohadharani |
| 6 | Kwa funga kukamilika | Ya mwezi wa Ramadhani |
| 7 | Leo idi imefika | Sote tumo furahani |
| 8 | Idi hii ya Baraka | Yenye Kheri na Amani |

Today we are joyful, all of us who are present,
As the fasting is complete, of the month of Ramadan,
Today Eid has arrived, we are all in joy,
This blessed Eid of happiness and peace.

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|----|--------------------|----------------------|
| 9 | Rabbi 'tatupokelea | Mola wetu Rahamani |
| 10 | Thawabu zitatimia | Za kufunga Ramadhani |
| 11 | Na mwezi ulobakia | Rabba atatuani |
| 12 | Mkono twanyoshea | Wa Idii upokeeni |

The Lord will receive for us, our Merciful God,
The reward of fasting during Ramadan will be complete,
And during the month that remains the Lord will help us,
We extend the hand of Eid so that you may take it.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 13 | Iddi yetu ya Fakhari | Popote Ulimwenguni |
| 14 | Sote huwa twanawiri | Twapendeza Waumini |
| 15 | Rabbi atupe Mazuri | Akhera na Duniani |
| 16 | Mkono huu wa kheri | Wa iddi upokeeni |

Our Eid is splendid in the whole world,
We are all shining, the faithful have
May the Lord give us good things, in the Hereafter and this world,
This hand of the blessings of Eid, take it.

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|----|--------------------|---------------------|
| 17 | Iddi imetufikia | Shime na tufurahini |
| 18 | Rabbi taijala | Iwe iddi ya Amani |
| 19 | Watoto kushangiria | Na kufurahi nyoyoni |
| 20 | Mkono twawanyoshea | Wa iddi upokeeni |

Eid has come, let us celebrate!
Our Lord may make it a peaceful Eid,
The children are celebrating and joyful in their hearts,
We extend the hand of Eid so that you may take it.

B18 Miladi ya Kheri 'Blessed Birth'

Habshy

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|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Miladi ya Kheri | Ya Tumwa Rasuli |
| 2 | Tunafurahia | Sote waumini |

The blessed birth of the Prophet
All of us faithful are joyful about it.

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|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 3 | Leo tumefurahika | Sisi sote waumini |
| 4 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 5 | Kwa mazazi ya baraka | Yenye kheri na Amani |

Today we are joyful, all of us faithful,
The hearts are merry with the joy without equal,
About the blessed birth, of happiness and peace.

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|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6 | Tarehe kumi na mbili | Mfungo sita shahari |
| 7 | Alizaliwa Jamili | Mtume wetu Rasuli |
| 8 | Dunia ikanawiri kikweli | Kwa mazazi ya Bashiri |

On the 12th of the 6th lunar month
The beatiful was born, our Prophet, the Messenger,
The world was luminous because of the birth of the Bashiri.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 9 | Sote tumejumuika | Sisi sote waumini |
| 10 | Kwa mazazi kukumbuka | Ya Mtume l-Amini |
| 11 | Na sifa njema hakika | Alipewa na Manani |

We have assembled, all of us faithful,
To commemorate the birth of the Trustworthy Prophet,
And his truly flawless character, that he was given by the Gracious.

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|----|---------------------|--------------------|
| 12 | Sifa za wetu Habibi | Hazina hata kifani |
| 13 | Kamsifu wetu Rabbi | Mola wetu Rahamani |
| 14 | Katika chake Kitabu | Kitukufu Qur-ani |

The traits of our Beloved, have not a single example,
The Lord has praised him, our Merciful Protector,
In his book, the holy Qur'an.

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|----|---------------------|---------------------|
| 15 | Ni yupi muongofu | Kama Tumwa Hashimia |
| 16 | Mwenye kila utukufu | Na sifa zilotimia |
| 17 | Na wingi utakatifu | Na njema mno tabia |

Who is a guided person like the Messenger of the Hashim,
The one who has greatness and perfect traits,
And much purity and a sound character.

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|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 18 | Yeye ndie muadhamu | Mola amemchagua |
| 19 | Akampa na Makamu | Siku itapowadia |
| 20 | Shifaa ilo Muhimu | Tumwa atatumbea |

He is indeed the exalted, the Lord has chosen him,
He gave him status/prestige when the day came,
Important intercession, the Messenger will supplicate for us.

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|----|--------------------|---------------------|
| 21 | Mikono tuinueni | Sisi sote waumini |
| 22 | Tumuombe rahamani | Atupe neema nchini |
| 23 | Atulinde ya Manani | Na kila la Nukusani |

Our hands let us raise, all of us faithful,
To implore the Merciful to give us prosperity in this country,
Protect us, oh Gracious, from any mischief.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 24 | Sala njema na Salamu | Zimshukie Hashimu |
| 25 | Na sahabaze KIRAMU | Nasi sote isilamu |
| 26 | Kwa jaha ya Muadhamu | Tupe Jannatu Naimu |

Blessings and peace, may descend upon the Hashim,
And his excellent companions and all of us Muslims,
By the glory of the Exalted, grant us splendid Paradise.

B19 Shangiria 'Celebrate!'

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Shangiria Sifa za Nabia | Twakuombea upate Mema |
| 2 | Yaillahi ya Jalia | Peponi Rabbi nae tatutia |

Celebrate the traits of the Prophet, we pray for you to receive goodness,
Oh allah, oh Granter, into Paradise, Lord, put us.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 | Tumwa wetu Mkaramu | Yeye ndie Muokozi |
| 4 | Yeye ndie Muadhamu | Siku hiyo Mwenyezi |
| 5 | Yaillahi ya Jalia | Peponi Rabbi Nae tatutia |

Our Generous Prophet is indeed the Rescuer,
He is indeed the Exalted, on that day the Allmighty,
Oh Allah, Oh Granter, into Paradise, Lord, put us.

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|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 | Wewe ndie Mtukufu | Wa mitume yote pia |
| 7 | Mungu amekusharifu | Vitabuni katwambia |
| 8 | Yaillahi Yaraufu | Peponi Rabbi Nae tatutia |

You are indeed the greatest of all all the Prophets together,
God has made you noble, in (His) books he told us,
Oh Allah, oh Kind, into Paradise, Lord, put us.

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|----|------------------|--------------------------|
| 9 | Amezawa Kasifika | Tumwa wetu l-Anam |
| 10 | Mno amenadhifika | Hata hana |
| 11 | Yaillahi Msifika | Peponi Rabbi Nae tatutia |

He was born pure, our Prophet, the best of mankind,
He is absolutely clean, he has not a single blemish,
Oh Allah, oh Pure, into Paradise, Lord, put us.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 12 | Yeye ndie Muokozi | Alotutoa gizani |
| 13 | Amefanya kubwa kazi | Kwa kusimamia dini |
| 14 | Yaillahi ya Mwenyezi | Peponi Rabbi Nae tatutia |

He is indeed the Rescuer, who took us out of darkness,
He achieved a great work by instituting religion,
Oh Allah, oh Allmighty, into Paradise, Lord, put us.

B20 Mahari 'Bride Wealth'

Ukhti Saada Mohamed

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|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Leo tumefurahika | Watu wote kwa yakini |
| 2 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 3 | Kwa Mahari kutufika | Sote tumo furahani |
| 4 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

Today we are happy, truly all people are,
 Our hearts are elated with incomparable happiness,
 As the bride wealth has reached us, we are in happiness,
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

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|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | Karibuni karibuni | Wageni wetu adhimu |
| 6 | Mjione Munyumbani | Mufurahi Waadhamu |
| 7 | Sisi twawapokeeni | Kwa furaha ilo timu |
| 8 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

Welcome, welcome, our excellent guests,
 Feel at home, be happy, exalted people,
 We welcome you with complete joy,
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 9 | Mahari yetu adhimu | Leo tunayapokea |
| 10 | Twayapokea kwa hamu | Huku twayashangiria |
| 11 | Mahari yaliyotimu | Ya Ka ... yatokea |
| 12 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

Our exalted bride wealth, today we receive it,
 We receive it with longing and we celebrate it at the same time.
 The perfect bride wealth, comes from brother ...
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 13 | Mahari jambo la kheri | Mola hulifurahia |
| 14 | Ni zawadi iso shari | Kwa yule anaepewa |
| 15 | Ni Sunna ilo nzuri | Ya Mtume msifiwa |
| 16 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

Bride wealth is a blessed thing, the Lord rejoices in it,
 It is a gift without evil, for the one who is given it.
 It is a good sunna, of the praiseworthy Prophet.
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 17 | Nasi bila ya kiburi | Mahari twayapokea |
| 18 | Tena bila ya Makali | Hapana la kuzuia |
| 19 | Tena Mikono miwili | sote tunayapokea |
| 20 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

And we too, without showing off we receive the bride wealth,
 And also without resolution, there is nothing that restrains,
 With two hands, all of us receive it.
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 21 | Twakuomba ya Qahari | Rabbi unatusikia |
| 22 | Kwa Haya yetu Mahari | Yawe yenye manufaa |
| 23 | Uyaepushe na shari | Dada ... Kumfika |
| 24 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

We ask you, oh Subduer, Lord, you hear us,
 For this bride wealth of ours, may it be of assistance,
 Keep it away from evil, (when) it gets to Sister ...
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 25 | Mahari uyadumishe | Hadi ndoa kufikia |
| 26 | Mahasidi waepushe | Wasije tuharibia |
| 27 | Yaje yatufurahishe | Ndoa itapofikia |
| 28 | Mahari yawe ya kheri | Ya Salama na Amani |

Sustain the bride wealth, until the marriage comes,
 Keep the jealous away, so that they cannot ruin it for us.
 It (the bride wealth) shall make us happy, when the wedding comes,
 May the bride wealth be of luck, of peace and good faith.

B21 Ewe Mukhubiri ‘Oh Bearer of News’

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|---|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Ewe Mukhubiri | Wa kila siri |
| 2 | Salamu tukufu | Zako kathiri |
| 3 | Rasuli Habibi | Mtume Bashiri |
| 4 | Mwenye kusifiwa | Nyingi Rehema |

Oh Messenger of every secret,
 Your holy greetings are numerous,
 Beloved Messenger, the Messenger of good news,
 He who is praised for his great compassion.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------|
| 5 | Ulipochomoza mwezi | Wa kheri |
| 6 | Zikashikamana | Zote kamari |
| 7 | Sijamuonapo | Mtu Mzuri |
| 8 | Uso wa Furaha | Kama Hashima |

When the moon of good fortune appeared,
 All the stars held on to each other,
 I have not seen a beautiful human,
 A blissful face, like that of the Honourable.

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|----|----------------|------------------|
| 9 | Wewe ndie jua | Ndie kamari |
| 10 | Wewe ndie Nuru | Juu ya Nuri |
| 11 | Wewe ni Kimea | Cha kula kheri |
| 12 | Wewe ndie taa | Yenye Nuru njema |

You are indeed the sun, indeed the moon,
 You are indeed the light upon light,
 You are the bud of every blessedness,
 You are indeed the lamp, that has a fine light.

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|----|-----------------|--------------|
| 13 | Wewe ni Mpenzi | Tumwa Rasuli |
| 14 | Wa masharikaini | Arusi kweli |
| 15 | Ndie Mkawisha | Mto wa Mali |
| 16 | Vibla viwili | Ndio Imama |

You are the Beloved, the Messenger,
 The groom of every sunrise,⁶
 Indeed the Giver of Power to the river of wealth
 Of the two *qiblas*, indeed the imam.

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|----|-----------------|--------------|
| 17 | Rabbi Tuerehemu | Viumbe pia |
| 18 | Utupe Samahani | Kwa yote pia |

⁶ Cf. Qur'an 70: 40: *rabb al-mashriq* 'the Lord of every sunrise.' I am grateful to Omar Babu for this reference.

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|----|----------------|-----------------|
| 19 | Rabbi turehemu | Sote jamia |
| 20 | Utupe na Sisi | Kila jambo jema |

Lord have mercy on all us creatures,
Grant forgiveness to us all,
Lord have mercy on us all together,
And give us everything that is good.

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|----|-----------------|-------------|
| 21 | Mjumbe wa Mola | Tumekujia |
| 22 | Kwa ziara yako | Twakusudia |
| 23 | Twataka shufaa | Kwako Nabia |
| 24 | Kwa Makosa yetu | Iwe Salama |

Messenger of the Lord, we have come to you,
By visiting you we intend,
To ask for intercession from you, Prophet,
For our mistakes, may there be salvation.

B22 Makka 'Mecca'

Mwinjuma Saadat

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|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Leo tumefurahika | Watu wote kwa yakini |
| 2 | Nyoyo zimetukunjuka | Furaha iso kifani |
| 3 | Kwa Nguzo kukamilika | Yake mola Rahamani |
| 4 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

Today we are joyfull, truly all the people,
 Our hearts are merry with joy without equal,
 As the pillars are complete, of the Merciful Lord,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | Wazee wetu twasema | Karibuni twawambia |
| 6 | Kurudi Makka Salama | Furaha twajionea |
| 7 | Kwa Insafu zenu njema | Leo twawafurahia |
| 8 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

Our elders we say welcome, we tell you,
 To return safely from Mecca, we will be happy,
 About your good subserviency, today we are happy for you,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|----|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 9 | Kwa kwenda Makka kuhiji | Nguzo kujitimizia |
| 10 | Na kumuomba Mpaji | Madhambi kuwafutia |
| 11 | Kubwa mnalotaraji | Kujisafisha Mabaya |
| 12 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

By going to Mecca for Hajj, you complete the pillars for yourself,
 And you ask the Giver, to wipe out your sins for you,
 The grand thing that you aspire to, is to clean yourself of any bad,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 13 | Kwa yote sasa yabidi | Mazuri kujifanyia |
| 14 | Kumuabudu Wadudi | Maasi kutorejea |
| 15 | Na Mola atawahidi | Idada kuendelea |
| 16 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

Because of all these now you are obliged to do good (deeds) for yourselves,
 To worship the Most Loving, not to return to disobedience,
 And the Lord will lead you aright, and continue counting (i.e. recording good deeds),
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|----|---------------------|--------------------|
| 17 | Twamshukuru jalali | Salama mmerejea |
| 18 | Ni wazima zenu hali | Na njema zenu Afia |

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|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 19 | Rabbi dua takabali | Umri kuwajalia |
| 20 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

We thank the Majestic, you have returned safely,
 You are in sound condition and good health,
 Lord, accept the supplication, fulfill their lives,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 21 | Wenzetu mmesharudi | Makka mloliendea |
| 22 | Kwa hiyo sasa yabidi | Mema kuyazingatia |
| 23 | Imani zenu kuzidi | ili lengo kufikia |
| 24 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

Our friends, you have already returned, from Mecca where you had gone,
 That is why now you should ponder goodness,
 Increase your faith, in order to reach the goal,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 25 | Rabbi watakabalie | Hijja walioendea |
| 26 | Thawabu Uwashushie | Imani kuwajalia |
| 27 | Nasisi tuwafatie | Uwezo kutujalia |
| 28 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

Lord, accept the Hajj from those who went,
 Send reward upon them, fulfill their faith,
 And we shall follow them, if we are granted the means,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

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|----|------------------------|-------------------|
| 29 | Hijja ni Nguzo ya tano | Ya dini isilamia |
| 30 | Mtume kawa mfano | Nguzo kujitimizia |
| 31 | Nasi kundini tuwemo | Uwezo kutujalia |
| 32 | Iwe Hija Maburura | Rabbi Tatukabalia |

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam,
 The Prophet set the example, of completing the pillars for himself,
 And us we shall be present in the group, if we are granted the means,
 May it be a deferential Hajj, the Lord will accept it from us.

B23 Rabbi Twakulingana ‘Lord, You Are Enough For Us’

Sheikh Bakathir

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|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Yarabbi Twakulingana | Azza wajala jalia |
| 2 | Allahu Maulana | Mema mawi yakwelea |
| 3 | Wala Mwengine hakuna | Ambae atukidhia |
| 4 | Muweza wa yote pia | Dua tutakabalia |

Oh Lord, you are enough for us, the Almighty and Granter,
Allah is our Protector, the good overrules the bad,
Nor is there anyone else who grants us (our needs),
The Capable of everything, accept our supplication.

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|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | Muumba | |
| 6 | Muumba mbingu na nchi | Na vilivyomo jamia |
| 7 | Murafu samawati | bighairi umudia |
| 8 | Uturuzuku umati | Na vinyama vya baria |
| 9 | Shariki wa gharbiya | Dua tutakabalia |

The Creator
The Creator of the heavens and the earth, and of everything that is in it,
The Raiser of the heavens, with no visible support,
Preserve us, the umma and the animals of the land,
East and West, accept our supplication.

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| 10 | Riziki | |
| 11 | Tufungulie Riziki | Zifatane na afia |
| 12 | Utuokowe na dhiki | Zilizo katika dunia |
| 13 | Munaimu l-afaki | Pasi Mwenye kusalia |
| 14 | Neema tuzidishia | Dua tutakabalia |

God's providence,
God's providence open for us, along with good health,
Rescue us from the distress that is in the world,
The Provider of abundant blessings (within) the horizon, without leaving out anyone,
Make our blessings plentiful, accept our supplication.

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|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 15 | Lazima | |
| 16 | Tutekeleze lazimu | Zilo katika sheria |
| 17 | Rukuni za wisilamu | Tuzifuate kwa nia |
| 18 | Za salati na siamu | Na nyengine zote pia |
| 19 | “situghuri Gharbiya | Dua tutakabalia |

Obligations
Let us fulfill the obligations of the law,
The pillars of Islam, let us follow them with intention,

(The pillars) of prayer and fasting, and all the others,
Do not lead us into strangeness/exile, accept our supplication.

20	Jioni	
21	Asubuhi na Jioni	Tusali vipindi pia
22	Na kufunga Ramadhani	Mwezi wote kutimia
23	Na zakka tusiikhini	Tutoe kama sheria
24	Na sadaka daimia	Dua tutakabalia

Afternoon

Morning and afternoon, let us pray at all times,
And fast during Ramadan, finishing the whole month,
And let us not refuse to give zakah 'obligatory charity,' let us give it as is the law,
And sadaqa 'voluntary charity,' accept our supplication.

25	Makazi	
26	Tuweke makazi mema	Na kheri za kutumia
27	Kwa cheo na taadhima	Na sururi daimia
28	Tusiwe washika tama	Ya watu kuyangalia
29	Na dhila tubaidia	Dua tutakabalia

Abode,

Put us into a good abode, and the blessings of using it,
With honour and respect, and eternal joy,
Let us not be among those who constantly move, and only look at others'
(homes,)
Keep us far from abasement, accept our supplication.

30	Madeni	
31	Tubaidie Madeni	Pasi mwenye kutumia
32	Tuishi ulimwenguni	Kwa sitara na afia
33	Mola wetu tuauni	Haja zetu tukidhia
34	Dhamiri tukamilie	Dua tutakabalia

Debts

Keep us far from debts,
May we live in the world with modesty and sound condition,
Our Lord, assist us, grant us our needs,
Complete our resolutions, accept our supplication.

35	Dhunubu	
36	Tughufirie dhunubu	Za jamii maasia
37	Mola wetu 'situghibu	Qabuli tupokelea
38	Na ambayo twalubu	Tuyapate yote pia
39	Bila chembe ya udhia	Dua tutakabalia

Sins

Forgive us our sins of all our disobedience,
 Our Lord, do not distance yourself from us, receive (our supplications) in
 acceptance,
 And what we aspire to, may we get it all,
 Without the minutest annoyance, accept our supplication.

40 Muombwa

41	Tunakuomba Qahari	Ya rabbi watusikia
42	Wape subira ya kheri	Wazee wa mwana pia
43	Uwaepushe na Nari	Madhabi kusamehewa
44	Uwape pepo nzuri	Dua tutakabalia

The one who is supplicated to,
 We ask you, Subduer, Oh Lord, you hear us,
 Give them blessed patience, the elders and the children as well,
 Keep them away from the Fire, their sins forgiven,
 Give them the beautiful Paradise, accept our supplication.

B24 Iddu Saidu 'Happy Eid'

Ustadh Abbas Juma

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|---|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Sote waumini | Tumefurahika |
| 2 | Kote duniani | Kumenawirika |
| 3 | Mwezi Ramadhani | Umekalika |

All of us faithful are happy,
The whole world is illuminated,
The month of Ramadhan has come to an end.

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|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 4 | Walofunga kwa imani | Pamoja na ikhtisaba |
| 5 | Twataraji kwa Manani | Kutufutia ikaba |
| 6 | Atulipe rahamani | Rayyanati-abwaba. |

Those who fasted because of their belief and to seek God's reward in the Hereafter,
We hope that the Gracious will erase our gloom,
That the Merciful will reward us with the fragrances of the doors

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|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| 7 | Mfungo wa Ramadhani | Umekwisha kamilika |
| 8 | Twanawiri visiwani | Idil-fitri inawaka |
| 9 | Imejaa Rauhani | Angani metandazika |

The lunar month of Ramadan is already complete,
We are illuminated on the islands, Eid al-Fitr shines,
There are plenty of fragrant flowers, they are spread out on the sky.

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|----|----------------------|--------------------|
| 10 | Siku ya leo yakini | Sunna kutembeleana |
| 11 | Mkono wa idi jamani | Huwa sisi twapeana |
| 12 | Mapenzi yajae moyoni | Waumini kupendana |

Today is the day that it is sunna to visit one another,
The hand of Eid, friends, is what we give each other,
May love fill our hearts, the faithful love each other.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 13 | Idii hasa makusudi | Ni ya yule mwenye khofu |
| 14 | Juu ya siku ya miadi | Akajiweka nadhifu |
| 15 | Sio kuvaa jadidi | Kisha kufanya machafu |

The purpose of Eid, for the one who fears,
The day that has been appointed, so he has purified himself,
It is not about wearing something new and then to commit dirty deeds.

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|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 16 | Lilobaki waumini | Kwetu sisi ajimali |
| 17 | Tuzifunge kwa imani | Siku sita za shawwali |
| 18 | Atulipe rahamani | Funga ya mwaka kamili |

What is left, faithful, to us
Is to fast with faith the six days of Shawwal,
So that the Merciful may reward us for a full year of fasting.

B25 Mlango wa Kwanza 'Chapter One'

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|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Ewe mola msalie | Rehema zimshukie |
| 2 | Pepo na zake neema | Akatiwa mja mwema |
| 3 | Aswali yao Hashima | Kipenzi chake jalia |

Oh Lord, bless him and send compassion upon him,
 Into Paradise and its bounty, may the good slave be put,
 Their origin is the Hashim, the Granter's darling.

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|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 | Naanza kwa imlaa | Jina lake maulaya |
| 5 | Muumba ziumbe pia | Wa mwanzo na akhiria |
| 6 | Bubujisho la baraka | Zatoka kwake nataka |
| 7 | Utongeze kuzandika | Sifa za kipenzi chema |

I begin the writing in the name of my Protector,
 The creator of all creates, of the beginning and end,
 A bursting forth of blessings, coming from Him, that's what I desire,
 Guide us in the writing of the praises of the pleasant darling.

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|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 8 | Pili naleta himidi | Kumshukuru wadudi |
| 9 | Ilo nzuri zaidi | Na taadhima pamoya |
| 10 | Ili hali ya kupanda | Ngamia mwema wakwenda |
| 11 | Kujakusanya matunda | Na sifa njema hashima |

Secondly, I bring commendations, thanking the Most Loving,
 That are most beautiful, together with glorifications,
 While mounting a good camel to go,
 And collect fruits and good praises of the Hashim.

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|----|----------------------|------------------------|
| 12 | Sala Salamu tukufu | Zende kwa mtakatifu |
| 13 | Alomsafi Latifu | Kwa tangu na awwalia |
| 14 | Nuru yalonakilika | kwa mababu wasoshaka |
| 15 | Ndiwe wenye kutajika | Kwa nyuso zilizo njema |

Exalted blessings and peace, may go to the Pure,
 Who was purified by the Gentle from the beginning of time,
 The light that moving around between his forefathers without doubt,
 They are indeed the ones who shall be mentioned, from face to face.

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|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 16 | Tena nataka kwa Mungu | Anipe radhi bwanangu |
| 17 | Waliopewa mafungu | Wayukuu wa wanabia |
| 18 | Iwenee Masahaba | Natumai akraba |
| 19 | Waliopata Suhuba | Kwa tuma wetu Hashima |

Furthermore I ask of God, to give me forgiveness, my Master,
 Those who got their part, the grandchildren of the prophets,

May it proliferate among the companions, I hope for the closeness
Of those who had the friendship of our Prophet of the Hashim.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 20 | Nataka kwake Muliwa | Atongeze njia sawa |
| 21 | Ya shari mola Rasuwa | Iwe mbali mno ghaya |
| 22 | Anihifadhi latifu | Na kula la upotefu |
| 23 | Na njia zilizo chafu | Moya kutoiegema |

I ask of the Enlightened to lead us on the right path,
Any evil, Master, Prophet, may be far, far away,
May the Gentle protect me from getting lost,
And the paths that are dirty, not one (may I) rest upon.

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|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 24 | Sasa nanyosha Kishali | Kilo kizuri kwa kweli |
| 25 | Cha mazazi ya rasuli | Chatoka Abkariya, |
| 26 | Ili hali ya kutunga | Nasaba yenye mwanga |
| 27 | Kama niliyoiana | Kwa uzuri wake jema |

Now I unfold (the story of) the mantle that is truly beautiful,
Of the Messenger's progeny of perfection,
While I compose the shining lineage,
Like I observed in all its goodness and beauty.

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|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 28 | Nataka msada wako | Ilahi kwa nguvu zako |
| 29 | Yoyote ajae kwako | Harudi humpokea |
| 30 | Hapana mwenye kuasi | Wala mtii sisi |
| 31 | Ila nguvu za Mkwasi | Aliyepweke Karima |

I ask for your help, Allah, for you strength,
Anyone who comes to you, does not return without being received,
There is no one who disobeyed or who obeyed among us,
Only the strenghts of the Most Opulent, who is One, the Most Generous.

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|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 32 | Nashezo mola jalili | Kaburi yake rasuli |
| 33 | Kwa Manukato makali | Ya salama na taslima |

Perfume, Majestic Lord, the grave of the Prophet,
With strong fragrances of salvation and good wishes.

B26 Mlango wa Pili 'Chapter Two'

- 1 Ewe Mola msalie Salamu zimshukie

Oh Lord, bless him, send greeting down on him.

- 2 Baada ya haya nanena Nasaba ya wetu bwana
3 Alo kwa wake maina Mazuri tutimizikia
4 Baba yake kwa Sahihi Ni bwana Abdillahi
5 Alomuhusu illahi Kwa kumzaa Hashima

And after this I speak about the lineage of our Master,
His family with their beautiful names
His father, that is right, is Mister Abdallah,
God meant him to bear the Hashim.

- 6 Nae Abdilmuttalibi Ndie wa Mtume wa Bibi
7 Alomleya Habibi Kwa hali na mali pia
8 Hashimu Aloabidi Ibni abdi manafi
9 Mwenye nayo insafi Alokusanya mema

And Abdelmuttalib, who was indeed the Prophet's grandfather,
Who brought up the Beloved, with effort and money,
The Hashim who, the son of Abdimanaf,
He was also subservient, and brought together the good people.

- 10 Quswai shujaa kweli Mwarabu mwakabaili
11 Aloamekaa mbali Kudhaatal-Qaswiyya
12 Mpaka kumrejeza Illahi Mola muweza
13 Mji wenye kupendeza Makka yenye taadhima.

Qusay was a true hero, an Arab of (great) lineage,
Who was living far away, in the town of Quḍhā'ah,
Until he was returned, by God, the Almighty,
To the beautiful town of Mecca, the splendid.

- 14 Bwana ibni kilabi Murrata ibni Kaabi
15 Luwayyi bni Ghalibi Ibni fihri Quraishiya
16 Ibni Maliki bni Nadhri Ibni kinanata Mzuri
17 Ni Mabibi wa Bashiri Pamoja nae Khuzaima

Bin Kilab, Bin Murra bin Ka'ab,
Lu'ay bin Ghalib bin Fihr of the lineage of the Quraysh,
Bin Malik bin Nadhr bin Kinana, the good,
They are the ancestors of the *Bashiri*, together with Khuzayma.

18	Mudrika iliyasa	Alokuwa na siasa
19	Aliyepeka kabisa	Ngamial- haramiya
20	Alisifiwa yakini	Humo mwake Maungoni
21	Mtume wetu Amini	Akimtaya karima

(Khuzaima) bin Mudrikah bin Ilyas, who was (the first to start) the model,
to bring Camels to the holy places (at Mecca),
He was truly praised here among them,
By our trustworthy Prophet while mentioning the Generous.

22	Mudhara ibni Nizari	Maabdi sawa khubiri
23	Adnani Tafsiri	Nasaba kumalizia
24	Kawazika maalimu	Nasaba yake Mtumi
25	Mapaka kwa Ibrahim	Amezuiwia Hashima

Mudhar bin Nizar bin Maadi are mentioned,
Adinan is explained to be closing the lineage,
He is the end of what is known of the lineage of the Prophet,
(Tracing it further) to Ibrahim was rejected by the Prophet.

26	Ama huzu Adnani	Hakuna la ushindani
27	Kwa wetu wanazuoni	Ndilo alozingatia
28	Mpaka kwa Ismaili	Nasaba yake Rasuli
29	Kwa Riwaya ilo kweli	Ndipo hapo pakukoma

But concerning Adinan, there is nothing to dispute,
Among our scholars, which is pondered on,
Until Ibrahim (reaches) the lineage of your Prophet,
This is a true Hadith, this is where one stops.

30	Tukuzae Mngu wangu	Nasaba ya tumwa wangu
31	Ni paa ya ulimwengu	Ndio nyota ya dunia
32	Mfano mkisifiwa	Tumwa alotanguliwa
33	Kati kati ametiwa	Kama Kamari ilo njema

My God, bless the lineage of my Prophet,
It is the raise of the world, indeed the star of the world,
As an example among the praiseworthy Prophets, who came before him,
He was placed in the middle, like a shining star.

34	Nasaba kwa wema wake	Utadhani pambo lake
35	Ni nyota kung'ara kwake	Au shamsu dhahiya
36	Kipenzi cha moyo wangu	Fakhari ya Ulimwengu
37	Yoyote mwenye machungu	Akikutaya hukoma

The goodness of his lineage is thus that you would think its adornment,
Is like the sparkling of a star, or the shining of the sun,

The beloved of my heart, the pride of the world,
Anyone who has bitterness, when he mentions you he heals.

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|----|----------------------|---------------------|
| 38 | Tukuza Nasaba hii | Aloisafi Manani |
| 39 | Na ndoa ya Kishetani | Zina hawakutumia |
| 40 | Imepokewa Riwaya | Kwa naibu alorawiya |
| 41 | Ndie twampendelea | Kwa hayo aloyasema |

Bless this lineage, that was purified by the Gracious,
And they did not commit fornication or vicious marriages,
The story has been received on behalf of the one who told it.
He is the one we prefer for what he has said.

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|----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 42 | Amehifadhi wadudi | Utayo wa Muhammadi |
| 43 | Kwa mababu amjadi | Udhu kutowasikia |
| 44 | Aliwapa ya haramu | Aibu usidhumu |
| 45 | Tangu kwa yeye Adamu | Hata kwa baba na Mama |

The Loving has kept him, the name of Muhammad,
With his creditable forefathers who did not hear any accusations,
He gave them protection so that shame would not touch them,
From Adam to his father and mother.

B27 Mlango wa Tatu 'Chapter Three'

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| 1 | Alipopenda wadudi | Kumueta Muhammadi |
| 2 | Na ule wake waadi | Alokitwagizia |
| 3 | Akamleta Jalili | Ruhu na kiwiliwili |
| 4 | Kwa sura yake kamili | Mtume aliyomwema |

When he pleased, the Most Loving, brought Muhammad,
And it was His exhortation, that he wanted us to fulfill,
The Majestic brought him with a sould and a body,
With his perfect face, the Prophet who is good.

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| 5 | Kamghurisha Manani | Kwa Amina uzaoni |
| 6 | Kamleta duniani | Kutongoza sote pia |
| 7 | Alimughusu Jabbari | Amina Ummi Bashiri |
| 8 | Kwa kumpa nyingi kheri | Na zipawa zema zema |

The Gracious displaced him into Amina's womb,
He brought him into the world to lead us all,
The Almighty made Amina, Mother of the Bashiri,
Special by giving her many blessings and good gifts.

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| 9 | Kukanadiwa mbinguni | Pamoya na ardhini |
| 10 | Kuwa mimba ya Amini | Imekwisha chukuliwa |
| 11 | Wakapenda wote hapo | Kupitiwa na Upepo |
| 12 | Wammande waliopo | Waliketi hima hima |

It was announced in the heavens together with on the earth,
That the foetus of the trustworthy was finally taken,
All those present wished to be passed through by the wind
And morning dew (of his news), they sat down quickly.

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|----|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 13 | Wakatamka wanyama | Kwa fasaha ule usiku |
| 14 | Kwa ndimi zilizonjema | Lugha ya kiarabia |
| 15 | Milili ikapomoka | Masanamu yakaanguka |
| 16 | Kwa nyuso za uhakika | Na makanwa him hima |

The animals spoke beautifully that evening,
In the tongues that are good, in Arabic language,
The beds burst through and the idols fell over,
Truly, on their faces and mouths they fell quickly.

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| 17 | Wakafanya bishara | Ndege waliopo bora |
| 18 | Na wengine walo bora | Wanyama wa baharia |
| 19 | Yakawa mazuri mambo | Hakuna lilo na kombo |
| 20 | Kama walokunywa tembo | Kwa furaha nyingi jamaa |

They told each other the good news, the birds
 And other excellent animals, like the ones in the sea.
 Things were good, there is no difficulty,
 They were as if drunk by the happiness.

21	Wakaambia majini	Kukurubia zamani
22	Na ndimi ya kikuhan	Mola akawavunjia
23	Kula aliyemuuzi	Kanena hakuajiizi
24	Kwamba Mtume azizi	Duniani Amekwima

And the jinns said that the time had come,
 And the foreboding tongues, the Lord destroyed them,
 Everyone who annoyed him; when He spoke he was not feeble,
 That the Beloved Prophet stands tall in this world.

25	Na alijiwa Mamake	Kwenye usingizi wake
26	Akambiwa Mimba yake	Ya Bwana wa wote pia
27	Utakapomzaa	Nuru itayozagaa
28	Jina lake hili twaha	Muhammadi mja mwema

And his mother was visited in her sleep
 She was told of her pregnancy of the Master of all,
 When you will give birth to him, light will shine,
 His name is Taha Muhammad, the good creation.

B28 Mlango wa Nne 'Chapter Four'

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Ilipotimu kamili | Mimba miezi miwili |
| 2 | Kwa sahihi ya kauli | Maneno yalopokewa |
| 3 | Aliifunga safari | Huyo babake bashiri |
| 4 | Akanenda Munnawwari | Madina mji wa wema |

When the pregnancy had completed two months,
In the true speech, the words that have been received,
He travelled, he the father of the Bashiri⁷
He went to the Illuminated, Medina the town of excellence.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | Kuketi mwezi kamili | Abdillahi il-hali |
| 6 | Kawazuri wote hali | Wa bani najjaria |
| 7 | Maradhi yakamshika | Mwezi mzima hakika |
| 8 | Asione kupunguka | Ila ajali hukoma |

He stayed for a whole month, Abdallah in the meantime,
He visited all relations, of the Bani Najjar,
Illness seized him, a full month surely,
He did not see it getting better, it only ended quickly.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------------|
| 9 | Yalipotimu yuani | Miezi tisia yakini |
| 10 | Hunena wanazuoni | Kwa nyezi za kwandamia |
| 11 | Zikakurubia zama | Kuzaliwa tumwa musema |
| 12 | Kutuza dunia nzima | Kazikatuwa Karima |

When they finished, she was suffering, the nine month surely,
So the scholars say, of new moons (to appear),
When the turn came for the promised Prophet to be born
To make a gift to the whole world, he made it shine, the Generous One.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 13 | Usiku wenye amani | Walingia paziani |
| 14 | Mabanati wa Peponi | Mariyamu na Asiya |
| 15 | Ukamshika uchungu | Kazawa tumwa wa Mngu |
| 16 | Zikafunguka na mbingu | Ikang'ara nuru njema |

In a peaceful night, they entered (behind) the screen,
The Paradise daughters, Maryam and Asya,
Bitterness seized her, God's Prophet is born,
The sky opened and a beautiful light shone.

[Kiyamu
in Arabic from the Barzanji]

⁷ *Bashiri* honorific name for Muhammad 'bringer of good news.'

[Or alternatively the Swahili Kiyamu:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------|
| 17 | Uso wake huzagaa | Kama jua |
| 18 | Nuru yake ni mwezi | Usopungua |
| 19 | Ndie pweke mwema | Aloteuliwa |
| 20 | Kutu zote alikatua | Hashima |

His face shines like the sun,
His light is that of a full moon,
He is indeed the only good, the Chosen One,
All rust he brightens, the Hashim.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------|
| 21 | Muhammadi siku | Alozaliwa |
| 22 | Kama idi furaha | Walizielewa |
| 23 | Ya wadudi ndio dini | ilo sawa |
| 24 | Mola kashusha baraka | Na Rehema |

The day Muhammad was born,
Was happy as Eid. They understood,
The true religion of the Loving.
The Lord has sent down blessings and mercy.

- | | | |
|----|--------------|--------------------|
| 25 | Ndowa sururi | Alopewa mama yake |
| 26 | Ni faghari | Wasopata wanawake |
| 27 | Yenye kheri | Kawateya watu wake |
| 28 | Utukufu | Kamshinda Maryama |

The joy that his mother was given,
Is an honour that not all women get,
With blessings he brought his people,
In holiness, she has defeated Maryam.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------------------|
| 29 | Yalikuwa mazazi | Yake Bashiri |
| 30 | Ni balua na shonga | Kwa makafiri |
| 31 | Hayakuwa | Waloazimu yashari? |
| 32 | Mola kawapa | Khasara wakakoma |

The Prophet's birth was
Grief and incitement for the disbelievers,
They did not happen, what they evil intentions were,
The Lord gave them loss so that they would cease.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 33 | Na furaha hapo | Zikafuatana |
| 34 | Wa fasaha Mahatifu | Wakanena |
| 35 | Ndie twaha huyu | Alozawa Bwana |
| 36 | Zimethubutu | Furaha zisokoma |

And the happiness there was followed,
 By the announcers telling in pure speech,
 That indeed the Master who was born was the Taha,
 This endless happiness was firmly established.]

37	Na hapa pamesuniwa	Kusimama ndio sawa
38	Sifa zake msafiwa	Mazazi yake kutaywa
39	Furaha na Muangaza	Kwa wenye kumtukuza
40	Mtume wetu Aziza	Shafi'i wa sote Umma

And here it is Sunna, to stand up is right,
 (When) the praises of the Pure One's birth are mentioned,
 Joy and light, on those who hallow him,
 Our Beloved, the Healer of the Umma.

[Not notated, but sung in my recording:]

41	Nushika Mola Jalili	kaburi lake rasuli
42	Kwa manukato makali	Ya salama na taslima

May the Magnificent Lord perfume the grave of the Prophet,
 With sweet/strong odours of peace and respect.

B29 Mlango wa Nne 'Chapter Four'

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Ilipotimu Aswahi | Miezi miwili |
| 2 | Mimba ya Mtume | Baada ya nyingi kali |
| 3 | Zilokhitilafu | Kwa watu wenye akili |
| 4 | Wanazuoni wahadithi | Wapokezi wema |

When the pregnancy had completed two months,
In the true speech, the words that have been received,
He travelled, he the father of the Bringer of good news,
He went to the Illuminated, Medina the town of excellence.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|------------------------|
| 5 | Baba wa Mtume | Amekufa nchi ya Madina |
| 6 | Huyo mtukufu | Abdillahi lake jina |
| 7 | Hakuwa mkubwa | Amekufa angali kijana |
| 8 | Kabla kuzawa | Mwanawe tumwa Hashima |

The father of the Prophet died in the city of Madina,
This blessed man, Abdallah was his name,
He did not get old, he died a young man,
Before his child, the Prophet, the Hashim, was born.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 9 | Yalipomfika Abdillahi | Maradhi yake |
| 10 | Alipita kwao kwa | Wajomba wa baba yake |
| 11 | Ni Banii Adiyi | Najjari taifa lake |
| 12 | Kulikomukhusu | Kukeni babuye hashima |

When illness struck Abdallah,
He was at his ancestral home, with the maternal uncles of his father,
Who are the Bani Adiy, Najjar is their tribe,
Where he became ill, he was staying with the Hashim's grandfather,

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 13 | Alikaa hapo kwa | muda wa mwezi mzima |
| 14 | Na hali mgonjwa | Maradhi yamemuandama |
| 15 | Wakashughulika | Kumuuguza kwa wema |
| 16 | Na kumfanyia | kwa kila jambo la huruma |

He lived there for a whole month,
While he was ill, illness, had overpowered him,
They were occupied to treat his suffering with goodness,
And to do for him all acts of compassion.

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 17 | Ilipotimia miezi tisa ya kuandama |
| 18 | Juu ya ukweli wa maneno ya Maulana |
| 19 | Wamethibitisha kwa wote zao kalima |
| 20 | Wanawazuoni wa hadithi wapokezi wema |

When nine lunar months were complete,
 By the truth of the words of our Lord,
 They confirmed in all their speeches,
 The scholars of Hadith, the good receivers.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|------------------------|
| 21 | Zikakurubia zama | zake za kutokana |
| 22 | Kwa kiu ambayo | ilokuwa imesonga sana |
| 23 | Nayo kutokuwa | Dini kweli mote hapana |
| 24 | Sasa atazawa mwenye | haki dunia nzima |

And the time for him to appear drew close,
 Because of the thirst, that was very pressing,
 And the true religion was nowhere,
 Now will be born the one who brings the right to the whole world.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 25 | Waliingia siku hiyo | ya kuzawa kwake |
| 26 | Mama wa Mtume | jamii ya wanawake |
| 27 | Mwana Mariyamu | na Asia na jamaa zake |
| 28 | Mahurul- aini | wametoka peponi wema |

On this day of his birth, they went in,
 To the mother of the Prophet, all them women,
 Maryam and Asiya and their relatives,
 The Hur came from Paradise.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 29 | Ukamshika uchungu | Mwana na Amina |
| 30 | Pasina taabu | Kamzaa wetu Sayyidina |
| 31 | Ikatoa anga Nuru | Yake Bwana wa Bwana |
| 32 | Ikizagazisha Jamii | Dunia nzima |

Bitterness seized the child and Amina,
 Without problems, gave birth to our Master,
 The air was effusing the light of the Master of Masters,
 It illuminated the whole world.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 33 | Kiyamu | |
| 34 | Uso wa Mtume | Kama jua hilo anga lake |
| 35 | Inapotokana humo | usoni mwake |
| 36 | Inapambanuwa hiyo | Nuru ya wajihi wake |
| 37 | Usiku Mtukufu ulo bora | Kwa anga jema |

The light of the Prophet's face was like that of the sun,
 It was coming from inside his face,
 The light of his face distinguished him,
 The blessed in this best night, with its good light.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 38 | Siku alipozawa | Mtume katika dini |
| 39 | Mekuwa furaha kubwa | mno mbinguni na nchini |
| 40 | Tangu mchanawe Jumatatu | Hata na jioni |
| 41 | Walitafakhari jamii | Dunia nzima |

The day the Prophet was born, was in religion,
A great joy, in the heavens and on the earth,
On that Monday, day and night,
Everyone in the whole world was blessed.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 42 | Ni binti Wahabi | Kwa kumzaa Tumwa karima |
| 43 | Ni binti Wahabi | Kwa kumzaa Tumwa karima |
| 44 | Fakhari ambayo | wasopewa wanawake pia |
| 45 | Nani kama yeye | Amina amezawa chema. |

It is the daughter of Wahab, who gave birth to the Generous Prophet,
It is the daughter of Wahab, who gave birth to the Generous Prophet,
An honour that not all women are given,
Who like her, Amina, gave birth to such a good child?

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 46 | Amewajalia Amina | Jamaa zake |
| 47 | Na mimba tukufu | Bora mno ni ya peke yake |
| 48 | Hata Mariyamu | Haufai uchukuzi wake |
| 49 | Alipomzaa Tumwa Issa | alo Bikira njema |

Amina perfected her family,
With the blessed pregnancy, alone in its special quality,
Not even Maryam can be taken (as an example),
When she gave birth to the Prophet Issa, while she was still a virgin.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 50 | Uzazi wa Mtukufu wa | Mtume ulopatikana |
| 51 | Katika nyota ya ukafiri | imeshuka sana |
| 52 | Na balaa nyingi na | Maradhi kila namina |
| 53 | Kwa zama ni hizo | Ndipo kuzawa Hashima |

The holy birth of the Prophet that took place,
Diminished the fate of heresy,
And lots of vexation and many kinds of illness,
In this era the *Hashim* was born.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 54 | Walifatanisha Wabashiri | Kumbashiria |
| 55 | Mtume wa Mungu | Kuzaliwa katika dini |
| 56 | Ikathibitika furaha | ulimwengu pia |
| 57 | Kwani ni Rehema | Mtume ya dunia nzima |

A crowd of foretellers have foretold him,
God'd Prophet was born, within religion,

Happiness became firmly established in the whole world.
Indeed he is a mercy, the Prophet of the whole earth.

58	Wamependelea Mashekhe	wamenena vyema
59	Utakapofika mahala	Hapo simama
60	Pa Uzao wake	Mtume ni taadhima
61	Wamethibitsha	waalimu dunia nzima

The Sheikhs prefer, they said so well,
When the place is reached, to stand up,
Of his, the Prophet's birth, so as to glorify,
So they confirm, teachers from the whole world.

62	Kheri nyingi sana	zake huyu na nyingi baraka
63	Anomtukuza mtume	dhati kwa hakika
64	Hupewa haja na makusudi	anayotaka
65	Amemuhidi kumpae	Mola karima

Great many wishes for him and many blessings,
Who glorifies the Prophet, truly with his soul,
He is given his needs and the aims that he wishes for,
So he was promised by the Generous Lord,

66	Linukishe vyema	Ya illahi mola raufu
67	Kaburi la Bwana	lizidishe harufu
68	Kila kunukacho uzuri	na utukufu
69	Ni hizo remema na	salama kwa tumwa Hashima

Perfume well, oh Allah, the Compassionate Lord,
The grave of the Master, increase its scent,
With everything that smells good and holy,
These are the Mercies and Peace for the Prophet, the *Hashim*.

B30 Furaha ya Harusi 'The Joy of a Wedding'

Ustadh Ibrahim Said Suleiman

- 1 Furaha Furaha Ya Harusi loe
2 Sote tunashangiria

Joy, joy, of a wedding,
Today we celebrate.

- 3 Harusi adhima Leo imefana
4 Kwa uzuri yavutia

A great wedding has taken place today,
It appeals with its beauty.

- 5 Maharusi leo Wamo furahani
6 Kwa kufunga yao ndoa

The couple are in joy today,
Because they have begun their marriage.

- 7 Hongera Dada ... Na kaka ...
8 Ndoa yenu idumu

Congratulations Sister ... and Brother ...
May your marriage last.

- 9 Hongera Wazazi Kwa Mema Malezi
10 Hadi ndoa kutimia

Congratulations to the parents for their sound upbringing,
Until the carrying out of the wedding.

- 11 Mapenzi Yazidi Usiku Mchana
12 Maisha Kufurahia

May love increase, at night and day,
And they lead happy lives.

- 13 Mpendane kikweli Kwa Shida na Raha
14 Na Huruma za Moyoni

Love each other truly, in hardship and bliss,
And have heartfelt compassion (for each other).

- 15 Ndoa ya Halali Rabbi ibariki
16 Na shari ziwe baidi

Lord bless this lawful marriage,
And keep evil far from them.

- 17 Uwape kizazi kike na kiume
18 Na Riziki ya Halali

Give them progeny of girls and boys,
And lawful means of subsistence.

- 19 Vigelegele Kwa Familia
20 Yake bibi Harusi

Ululations for the family
Of the bride.

- 21 Vigelegele Kwa Familia
22 Yake bwana Harusi

Ululations for the family
Of the groom.

- 23 Tunafurahia Harusi ya Dada ...
24 Tunashangiria Harusi ya Dada ...
25 Tunasherekea Harusi ya Dada ...
26 Leo kaolewa Sote tunashangiria

We are happy about the wedding of Sister ...
We are rejoicing in the wedding of Sister ...
We are celebrating the wedding of Sister ...
Today she got married, all of us are rejoicing.

- 27 Tunafurahia Harusi ya Kaka ...
28 Tunashangiria Harusi ya Kaka ...
29 Tunasherekea Harusi ya Kaka ...
30 Leo Ameoa Sote tunashangiria

We are happy about the wedding of Brother ...
We are rejoicing in the wedding of Brother ...
We are celebrating the wedding of Brother ...
Today he married, all of us are rejoicing.

- 31 Furaha wazazi Dada ... kaolewa
32 Furaha wazazi Kaka ... Ameoa
33 Vigelegele Kwa maharusi wema
34 Waishi Salama Maisha yenye furaha
35 Ibariki ndoa Ya kaka ... na dada ...
36 Inshallah Ndoa yao idumu

Happiness, parents, Sister ... got married.
Happiness, parents, Brother ... married.
Ululations for the pleasant couple.
May they live peacefully, a life of happiness,
Bless this marriage of Brother ... and Sister ...
God willing, their marriage will last.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|------------------|
| 37 | Furaha leo | Aila za Maharusi |
| 38 | Haya shangiria | Aila za Maharusi |

Happiness today, families of the couple,
Rejoice, families of the couple!

B 31 Yā rabbi ṣallī ‘alā al-nabī ‘God, bless the Prophet’

Translation by C. A. Johnson

- 1 Yā rabbi ṣallī ‘alā al-nabī man jā’anā bi-al-risālah
2 Ṭaha Muḥammad wa ālihi man kalamathu al-ghazālah

God, bless the Prophet, he who brought us the message;
Bless Ṭaha – Muḥammad – and his family, him to whom the antelope spoke;

- 3 Taḥta bāb al-‘aṭā qāṣidhu fī kullī ḥālah
4 Wa-al-rajāh fīhi yaj‘al khātimatnā al-jamālah

He who can always be found at the door of the Munificent
Because we anticipated him, we can be sure he is our final prophet, their beautiful
seal;

- 5 Yā samī‘ al-du‘ā khaīran yabghā dalālah
6 Rabbi dilluh wa-jannibhu al-radā wa-al-ḥalālah

You who hear clearly the bewildered supplication for a sign --
Lord, guide him, and save him from going astray;

- 7 Wa-an sa’ala yā karīm al-wajhi fa-aqbal su’ālah
8 Yā Allah irḥamhu wa-aj‘al fī jinānik ḥilālah

Please, Munificent One, accept whatever he asks of You;
Have mercy on him and make for him a place in Your garden;

- 9 Hua wa-ahluh wa-aṣḥābuh wa-jumlat ‘iyālah
10 Wa-al-ṣalāt ‘alā al-mukhtār khatmi al-risālah

For him, his family, his companions -- all those of his clan
Blessed be the chosen one, he who brought us the last message

- 11 Al-ḥabīb al-ladhī saīfuh ‘alaīhi jalālah
12 Al-nabī al-ladhī mā qaṭṭu talḥaq mithālah

The loved one whose sword glitters majestically
The prophet for whom there is no equal

- 13 Khaīri dā‘ī ilā al-taqwā bi-ṣidqi al-maqālah
14 Wa-al-ṣaḥābah wa-ni‘ma al-āli fī al-nās ālah

The best reason we have for trusting the truth of the message
And well-being for the companions and his family for the they are esteemed among
people

B32 Ḥamdun ‘Thanks’

Translation by C. A. Johnson

- 1 Ḥamdān liman aḥadā
2 Li-al-khalqī aḥmadā

Thanks to him – thanks!
For the Creation, thanks!

- 3 Bi-al-khalqī wa bi-al-hudā
4 Fataḥana bi-al-qur’ānī

With the Creation and right guidance
And the Koran He freed us

- 5 Ikhwānanā fī al-dīn
6 Kunu mutawatiqīn

Our brothers in faith
Make them firm in their faith

- 7 Summītum muslimīn
8 Fataḥana bi-al-qur’ānī

You called them Muslim
He freed us with the Koran

- 9 Wa ‘alā dhikri al-mīlād
10 Qad khitum yā amjād

And upon remembrance of the birth [i.e. of the Prophet]
He is the seal, oh praise-givers

- 11 Li-al-madhi wa-al-inshād
12 Wa-tilāwāt al-qur’ānī

In order to rejoice and sing out loud
Recite verses of the Koran

- 13 Wa ṣalāt ‘alā al-mukhtār
14 Wa ‘alā al-al al-aṭwāl

And blessing upon the Chosen,
And upon the exceedingly high family

15 Wa maulana wa maulana wa maulana mtume

Oh Lord, Oh Lord, the Prophet.

16 Wa kajitamma khulqa

17 Tumwa kajitamma khulqa

And he has a perfect character

The Prophet has a perfect character.

18 Mtume amepambwa khulqa

19 Mtume amepambwa khalqa

The Prophet is adorned with personality,

The Prophet is an adorned creation.

Kilimani**K1 Swala ya Mtume 'Blessings Upon The Prophet' (cf. B11, Z4, T4)**

- 1 Yarabi swali ala Muhammad
- 2 Yarabi swali alayhi wasalim

Oh Lord, pray upon Muhammad
Oh Lord, send a prayer upon him and peace

- | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| 3 | Tumwa mkaramu | ameshadhihiri |
| 4 | Nuru ya dhwalamu | khairi l-bashari |
| 5 | Hatozawa bwana | mfano rasuli |
| 6 | Twampenda sana | abal-batuli |

The Generous Prophet has been revealed
The light in the darkness, the best of mankind
No master/man will be born, like the Prophet
We love him so much, the father of the Virgin

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------|
| 7 | Nyota zilizimwa | nuru ikawaka |
| 8 | Kafa ya wanyama | waliyo tamka |
| 9 | Maneno mazuri | fasihi kalamu |
| 10 | Walikibashiri | na kutabasamu |

The stars were extinguished, Light shone
The entirety of animals who uttered
Beautiful words, clear speech
They brought the news, and smiled

- | | | |
|----|---------------|-----------------|
| 11 | Zilifurahika | jamii kauni |
| 12 | Alipozaliwa | baniadinani |
| 13 | Amezawa makka | nchi ya sharafu |
| 14 | Mji wa baraka | nao maarufu |

They were overjoyed, the whole tribe
When he was born, the Bani Adinan
He was born in Mecca, the city of the noble
The blessed land, that it famous

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|----------------|
| 15 | Tumwa ni mzuri | umbo na tabia |
| 16 | Jasholi ambari | rih-mis-kia |
| 17 | Umbo lake tumwa | kaumbwa awali |
| 18 | Usitie dhwanna | lisemalo kweli |

The Prophet is beautiful, his body and character,
His sweat is ambergris, a perfumed aroma,
The body of the Prophet was created first,
Do not doubt, what is said is true.

K2 Jibrilu Malaika 'Angel Gabriel'

1	Jibrilu malaika	kawakusanya haraka
2	Njoni nyote malaika	wote wakakusanyika
3	Kufika kawauliza	hamjaona muangaza
4	Wakajibu huo muangaza	ni nuru yake mtume
5	Sasa hivi kazaliwa	mwenye uzuri wa pekee
6	Aee! Zahariri	zahariri nywelwe zake
7	Aee! Kama nyota	Kama nyota macho yake
8	Aee! Ya mnara	Ya mnara shingo yake
9	Aee! Ya upanga	ya upanga pua yake
10	Aee! Za upinde	za upinde nyusi zake
11	Twendeni makka twendeni	enyi wenzangu malaika
12	Twende tukapambe pole	mama Amina hongera
13	Hongera mama Amina	hongera bibi Amina
14	Hongera na vigelegele	Mwana umejiungua
15	Aee! Zahariri	zahariri nywelwe zake
16	Aee! Kama nyota	Kama nyota macho yake
17	Aee! Za upinde	za upinde nyusi zake
18	Aee! Ya mnara	Ya mnara shingo yake
19	Aee! Yana wanja	yana wanja macho yake

The angel Gibreel assembled them quickly
 'Come all you angels', he gathered them all
 When they arrived he asked them 'Have you not seen the light?'
 They answered 'This light is the light of the Prophet.'
 'Just now he has been born, the one with singular beauty
 Aee! Of silk, of silk is his hair
 Aee! Like stars, like stars are his eyes
 Aee! Like a tower, like a tower is his neck
 Aee! Like a sword, like a sword is his nose
 Aee! Like a bow, like a bow are his eyelashes
 Let's go to Mecca, let's go, oh my fellow angels.
 Let's go to gently tell his mother Amina our congratulations
 Congratulations Mama Amina, congratulations Madam Amina
 Congratulations and ululations, the child has separated himself (ie has been
 born)
 Aee! Of silk, of silk is his hair
 Aee! Like stars, like stars are his eyes
 Aee! Like a bow, like a bow are his eyelashes
 Aee! Like a tower, like a tower is his neck
 Aee! They are blackened (lit. have) by antimony, they are blackened with
 antimony, his eyes.

K3 Twaanza Ismu ya Dhati 'We Begin With the Essential Name'

- 1 Twaanza Ismu ya dhati ya maulana
- 2 Swala na salamu zimwendee mwenye karama

We begin with the essential Name of our Protector,
Belssing and peace may go to him, who has graciousness.

- 3 Muombezi mwema wa Madhambi siku ya kiama
- 4 Kwenye makutano ya watu tutapokutana

He is the good intercessor for sins on the Day of Judgment,
The meeting of people where we will meet.

- 5 Zilipigwa dufu madina huko mchana
- 6 Kwa hiyo nadhiri aloweka huyo msichana

Frame drums were being played at Madina that day,
For the pledge that the girl made.

- 7 Kwa kauli nyingi za mashehe walizoshindana
- 8 Kwa kupigwa dufu maulidi ni jaizi sana

In the words of a majority of sheikhs who competed with each other,
A drum being played for maulidi is very permissible.

- 9 Jaizi sana jaizi sana kwa kupigwa dufu maulidi ni jaizi sana

Very permissible, very permissible, a drum being played for *maulidi* is very permissible

K4 Sote Tunashangiria 'We Are All Celebrating'

- 1 Sote tunashangiria aaa sherehe ya ndugu yetu leo amefunga ndoa

We are all celebrating, ah, the feat of our brother, today he married.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 | Ndugu yetu mtiifu | Yaa allah |
| 3 | Leo tunamwika taji | Yaa allah |
| 4 | Tunamuomba raufu | Yaa allah |
| 5 | Azidi kumfaraji | Yaa allah |
| 6 | Amjalie latifu | Yaa allah mema yawe mahitaji |

Our obedient brother, Oh Allah,
 Today we crown him, Oh Allah,
 We supplicate to the Most Kind, Oh Allah,
 May He increase to bless him, Oh Allah,
 May the Most Gentle fulfill him, Oh Allah, with all good needs.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 7 | Rabbi ampe baraka | Yaa allah |
| 8 | Ndani ya machumi yake | Yaa allah |
| 9 | Muepushie mashaka | Yaa allah |
| 10 | Jamii kazini kwake | Yaa allah |
| 11 | Kila anachokitaka | Yaa allah iwe kheri juu yake |

May the Lord give him blessing, Oh Allah,
 In his sources of gain, Oh Allah,
 Keep problems from him, Oh Allah,
 In all his occupations, Oh Allah,
 Everything he wants, Oh Allah, may it be lucky for him.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 12 | Na kaka yetu | Yaa allah |
| 13 | Kamata yetu wasia | Yaa allah |
| 14 | Jaha ya utu uzima | Yaa allah |
| 15 | Imekwisha kufikia | Yaa allah |
| 16 | Kuwa na ulimi mwema | yaa allah ndio nzuri tabia |

And our brother, Oh Allah,
 Hold on to our advice, Oh Allah,
 The honour of adulthood, Oh Allah,
 Has finally arrived, Oh Allah,
 Always have a pleasant tongue, Oh Allah, that is indeed good character.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 17 | Tunakuomba rahimu | Yaa allah |
| 18 | Zishuke upande wake | Yaa allah |
| 19 | Apate watoto wema | Yaa allah |
| 20 | Waume na wanawake | Yaa allah |
| 21 | Pia wadumu daima | yaa allah yeye na haiba wake |

We implore you, Most Merciful, Oh Allah,
 May they (blessings) come down on his side, Oh Allah,
 May he get good children, Oh Allah,
 Male and female, Oh Allah,
 May they all last forever, Oh Allah, he and his beauty of countenance and
 character.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 22 | Uchunge yako kauli | Yaa allah |
| 23 | Ya mwenzio kumwambia | Yaa allah |
| 24 | Usije ukamkabili | Yaa allah |
| 25 | Kwa analolichukia | Yaa allah |
| 26 | Atakulinda jalali | yaa allah na mema kukushukia |

Choose your speech well, Oh Allah,
 When you speak to your partner, Oh Allah,
 So that you may not confront her/him, Oh Allah,
 With what she/he despises, Oh Allah,
 The Majestic will protect you, Oh Allah, and send goodness upon you.

K5 Furaha Leo 'Happiness Today'

- 1 Furaha leo
- 2 Tushangirie ndoa
- 3 Ya bwana har
- 4 usi na bibi harusi
- 5 Furaha leo
- 6 Dada yetu kaolewa leo
- 7 Ya Allah
- 8 Awajalie uzazi
- 9 Awajalie watoto
- 10 Ya Allah
- 11 Tukubarikie ndoa

Happiness today
 Let us celebrate the union
 Of the Groom and the Bride
 Happiness today
 Our sister is married today
 Oh Allah
 Give them progeny
 Give them children
 Let us bless the union

- 12 Tuwaombe dua kwa mola awajalie
- 13 Waishi wakipendana awajalie
- 14 Wazae watoto wema awajalie

Let us make a supplication for them to the Lord, may He grant them,
 May they live in mutual love, may He grant them,
 May they bear good children, may He grant them,

- 15 Furaha leo tunafurahia
- 16 Furaha leo tunashangiria
- 17 Furaha leo tunashereheka

Happiness today we are happy
 Happiness today we are
 Happiness today we are celebrating

- 18 Al janatu wa an na'imu
- 19 Waliosema hayawi
- 20 Mbona leo yamekuwa

Paradise and it's beatitude,
 Those who said it would not be
 Why did it take place today?

- 21 Vigelegele kidogo
- 22 Tuifanye ada ndogo
- 23 Watoto wetu wadogo
- 24 Leo wamefunga ndoa

Some ululations
Let us make it a small feast
Our small children
Today they have married

- 25 Akina mama leo twashangiria
- 26 Harusi ya dada yetu

You women today we rejoice
The wedding of our sister

K6 Harusi Iliyo ya Kheri 'The Wedding That Is A Blessing'

- 1 Harusi! Harusiii!
- 2 Harusi iliyo ya kheri kwa
- 3 Mtume wetu aliye mwema,
- 4 Tunayosherekea siku ya leo x2

Wedding! Wedding!
 A wedding is a luck for
 Our Prophet who is good
 We are celebrating it this day of today

- 5 Mtume awajazie kheri na baraka

The Prophet may fulfill them luck and blessings

- 6 Leo na kesho kiama
- 7 na mashehe na wazazi
- 8 Na walimu wote watuombee dua.

Today and tomorrow on the day of Judgement
 For the Sheikhs and the parents
 And all teachers let us make dua for them.

K7 Harusi Yoo Yoo 'A Wedding!'

- 1 Harusi yoo yoo
- 2 Tuwaombee dua bwana na bibi harusi

A wedding oh oh,
Let us make dua for the groom and the bride.

- 3 Ndoa yao iwe ya kheri
- 4 Mbele yake tumwa nabia

May their wedding be of luck,
(Like) Before them the Prophet.

- 5 Ziwaondoke balaa
- 6 Ziwaondoke fitina
- 7 Ziwaondoke hasada
- 8 Bwana na bibi harusi

May all damage be far from them,
May all scheming be far from them,
May all jealousy be far from them,
The groom and bride.

- 9 Uwape nyingi rehema
- 10 Uwape nyingi baraka

Give them much mercy,
Give them many blessings.

K8 Leo Furaha Ya Ndoa 'Today We Are Happy About the Marriage'

- 1 Leo furaha leo furaha ya ndoa
2 Twafurahia sote tunafurahia

Happiness today, today the happiness of marriage,
We are happy about it, we are all happy about it.

- 3 Leo furaha ya ndoa sote tunafurahia
4 Waliosema hayawi mbona leo yamekuwa
5 Na wengine wamenuna kwa kuwa wameoana

Today we are all happy with wedding-happiness,
Those who said it would not be, why did it take place today,
And others are sulking because they have married.

- 6 Kaka ... leo amepata wake
7 Na Da ... amepata mwenzake

Brother ... has got his today,
And Sister ... has got her partner.

- 8 Vigeregere kidogo
9 tuifanye ada ndogo
10 Watoto wetu wadogo
11 leo wamefunga ndoa

Some ululation,
Let us make it a small feast,
Our small children,
Have got married today.

- 12 Tuwaombee salama bwana na bibi harusi

Let us ask for peace for the groom and bride.

K9 Leo Tumejumuika 'Today We Have Assembled'

- 1 Leo tumejumuika lengo ni kufurahika
- 2 Harusi yenye baraka sote tunafurahika

Today we have assembled, the aim is to be merry,
A wedding with blessings, we all rejoice it.

- 3 Bwana harusi twakupa wasia
- 4 Twaomba ushike tunayokwambia
- 5 Umepata wako sasa tulia
- 6 Usihadaike na viruka njia

Groom, we give you advice,
We ask you to remember what we tell you,
You have got yours , now settle down,
Do not get worked up with prostitutes.

- 7 Mpende mkeo kwa kila namna
- 8 Umpe vinywaji na vya kutafuna
- 9 Na umpe mavazi ya kila aina
- 10 Ndipo apendeze ufurahi sana

Love you wife in every manner,
Give her something to drink and to bite,
And give her clothing of every kind,
When she looks beautiful you will be very happy.

- 11 Ukenda kazini muage mkeo
- 12 Kwa ridhaa yake utapata cheo
- 13 Na utaporudi usikasirike
- 14 Bora ufurahi na yeye acheke

When you leave for work say goodbye to your wife
Through her contentment you will get
And when you come back don't get cross,
It is better for you to be happy so that she laughs

- 15 Usimdhania dhana ilo mbaya
- 16 Ukifanya hivyo wafanya vibaya
- 17 Kama kuna neno umelisikia
- 18 Fanya uchunguzi utapata njia

Do not think a bad thought of her
If you do so, you do badly,
If there is a word that you have heard,
Look into it properly, you will find a way.

- 19 Kama kuna kosa atakukosea
- 20 Mkanye vizuri atakusikia
- 21 Usisikilize ya watu wambeya
- 22 Utavunja ndoa na utajutia

When there is a mistake that she commits against you,
Tell her in a good way and she will listen to you.
Do not listen to the people who pry into your affairs,
You will destroy your marriage and you will regret.

K10 Bibi Harusi Huyo ‘The Bride Is Here’

- 1 Bibi harusi huyo
- 2 Bwana harusi huyo
- 3 Na wazazi wao hao
- 4 Na marafiki zao hao
- 5 Harusi hiyo

The bride is here
The groom is here
And their parents there they are
And their parents are here
This is a wedding

- 6 Twaomba Mola waweke
- 7 Furaha yetu
- 8 Bwana harusi kwa mkewe ni furaha ya milele
- 9 Bi Harusi kwa mumewe ni bahati ilo tele

We ask the Lord to keep them,
The groom for the bride is eternal happiness,
The bride is for the groom plenty of good luck.

- 10 Mola uwape subira
- 11 Na kizazi cha utungu
- 12 Ndoa yao sunna Bora
- 13 Kwa mtume washibiwa
- 14 Wameoana wawili
- 15 Wazae kumi na mbili
- 16 Waje wawili wawili

Oh Lord give them patience,
And a line of progeny,
Their marriage is an excellent sunna,
They are similar to the Prophet,
Two have married,
May they give birth to twelve,
May they come in twos.

- 17 Imeshaandikwa ndoa
- 18 Imeshaandikwa ndoa mbinguni

It has already been written the union,
It has already been written the union in heaven.

- 19 Waliosema hayawi
- 20 Mbona leo yamekuwa

- 21 Vigelegele vidogo
22 Iwe kama ada ndogo

Those who said it would not be,
Why did it take place today?
Some ululations,
May it be like a small feast.

Tarbiya Islamiya Mfereji Wawima

T1 Amina 'Amen'

Ustadh Amani Ussi Ame

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|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1 | Amina Amina | Ya rabbi amina |
|---|-------------|----------------|

Amen, Amen, Oh Lord, Amen.

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|---|----------------|------------------------|
| 2 | Baba na mama | jinsi gani mnajidharau |
| 3 | Amri ya bwana | sala tano mnazisahau |
| 4 | Huu ulimwengu | isilamu unaghururika |
| 5 | Siku ya kiyama | hasara itatufika |

Father and mother, how are you degrading yourselves,
(disobeying) the Lord's order, the five prayers you forget them,
This world of Islam is fatuous/deluded/conceited,
On the Day of Judgment, loss/spoil will come to us.

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|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 | Ewe dada yangu | usiringe kwa uzuri wako |
| 7 | Kanzu yako ndefu | na viatu miguuni mwako |
| 8 | Utabaki nayo sanda | na ubao wako |
| 9 | Utabaki wewe na mchanga | na amali yako |

Oh you, my sister, don't put on airs about your beauty,
With your long dress and the shoes on your feet,
You will be left with your burial cloth and plank,
You will be left with only sand and your deeds.

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|----|------------------------|----------------------|
| 10 | Na hasa vijana | kina kaka mnahadaika |
| 11 | Wana na mama | ibilisi anawatikita |
| 12 | Wangapi watoto wadogo | wanaotutoka |
| 13 | Kila chenye roho mauti | yamemuandama |

And especially you, the male youths, you are deceived,
Children and mothers, the devil chews them,
How many small children leave us,
Everyone with a soul death reaches them

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|----|-------------------------------|
| 14 | Allahu Allahu Allahu Ya Allah |
| 15 | Allahu Allahu Allahu Ya Allah |

Allah, Allah, Allah, oh Allah,
Allah, Allah, Allah, oh Allah.

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|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 16 | Adhabu ya kaburini | sala tano zipokee |
| 17 | Moyo ushike yakini | kampe akupendae |

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-----------------|
| 18 | Kuna tangu pima kumi | akhera akuombee |
| 19 | Atakuzonga mwilini | upate kukaa nae |

The torment of the grave replace with the five prayers,
Hold on to the truth in your heart, give it to the one who loves you,
There are five, measure ten, he/she will supplicate for you,
He/she will turn you around/ embrace you, that you may live with him/her.

T2 - Salama 'Tranquility'

Al-Hajji Juma Madawa

- 1 Salama ee! Ya rabbi salama

Tranquility, oh Lord, (we ask for) tranquility.

- 2 Oa mke mtiifu oa mke tukusifu
3 Oa uwache machafu yalio kwenye dunia

Marry an obedient wife, marry a wife that we may praise you,
Marry to leave behind dirty acts, that are in this world.

- 4 Leo ni siku adhimu watu wote wana hamu
5 Harusi yenye nidhamu leo twaishangiria

Today is an exalted day, all they people are anxious,
A well-mannered wedding is what we celebrate today.

- 6 Leo natufurahike kama kucheka tucheke
7 Vigelegele vitoke sherehe kushangiria

Today let us be happy, as to laughing, let us laugh,
Ululations shall resound, we feast the feast.

- 8 Jamani leo furaha sote tunaona raha
9 Kwa kweli sio mzaha harusi kushangiria

Friends, today we are happy, we are feeling bliss,
Truly, it is not a joke, to rejoice in a wedding.

- 10 Kufunga ndoa jamani ni jambo lenye thamani
11 Ukweli sio utani jamani nawambia

To marry, friends, is a valuable act,
The truth, not banter, friends, I tell you.

T3 Yarabbi Swalli 'Oh Lord, Send Prayers' (cf. B13)

Kiitikio:

- 1 Yarabbi swalli alla Muhammad
- 2 Yarabbi swalli alayhi wasallim
- 3 Yarabbi swalli wasallim alayhi

Oh Lord, send prayers upon Muhammad,
Oh Lord, send prayers upon him and peace,
Oh Lord, send prayers and peace upon him.

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|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 4 | Ilizagaa mianga | bwana alipodhihiri |
| 5 | Aliondosha ujinga | elimu kutukhubiri |
| 6 | Kasafisha ya kupinga | akaleta kulla kheri |

Lights were shining when the Master appeared,
He dismissed ignorance by teaching us knowledge,
He cleared all antagonism away, he brought all blessedness.

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|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 7 | Alikamilika mwendo | mzuri sana nabia |
| 8 | Akenda hana vishindo | mpole akikujia |
| 9 | Moyo hauna mafundo | kwa watu ni maridhia |

He had perfect ways, The Prophet was very beautiful/good,
He has no sudden outbursts, he was calm when he would come to you,
His heart has no knots, with people (he is) agreeable.

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|----|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 10 | Ni wa mwanzo alo mwema | kwa kuumbwa na jalia |
| 11 | Ni wa mwisho wa khatime | utume hakuna tena |

He is the first, who is good, to be created by the Granter,
He is the last, the seal, there is no more prophethood.

T4 Tumwa Mkaramu 'The Generous Prophet' (cf. B11, K1, Z4)

1	Tumwa mkaramu	Ameshadhihiri
2	Nuru ya dhalamu	Khairil- bushari
3	Hatozawa bwana	Mfano rasuli
4	Twampenda sana	Abal batuli

The Generous Prophet has been revealed
 The light in the darkness, the best of mankind
 No master/man will be born, like the Prophet
 We love him so much, the father of the Virgin

5	Zilifurahika	Jamii kauli
6	Alipozaliwa	Bani adi nani
7	Amezawa Makka	Nchi ya sharafu
8	Mji wa baraka	Nao maarufu

They were overjoyed, the whole tribe
 When he was born, the Bani Adinan
 He was born in Mecca, the land of the noble
 The blessed town, that it famous

9	Nyota zilizimwa	Nuru ikawaka
10	Kafa ya wanyama	Waliotamka
11	Maneno mazuri	Fas-hi kalamu
12	Walikibashiri	Na kutabasamu

The stars were extinguished, Light shone
 The entirety of animals who uttered
 Beautiful words, clear speech
 They brought the news, and smiled

13	Tumwa kazaliwa	Twaiban- dahina
14	Wanja ametiwa	Machoni yakina
15	Tena kasafika	Maktua Suri
16	Amenadhifika	Kushinda Johari

The Prophet is born, forever good,
 He has put antimony on his eyes, verily.
 Also he is pure, the Chosen (see above),
 He is clean, better than a jewel,

17	Nuru ya arishi	Ni ya Muhammad
18	Sifanye ubishi	Na zote juhudu
19	Sizishi kusifu	Sifa za Hashimu
20	Wote wasanifu	Hawakukhitimu

The light of the throne, is that of Muhammad,
Do not oppose/joke about all the efforts,
Don not stop to praise the praises of the Hashim,
All the skillful composers are not more apt than you.

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|----|---------------|----------------|
| 21 | Nuru iliwaka | Kuzawa Hashimu |
| 22 | Alokua Makka | Kawna Shamu |
| 23 | Haiwi nusura | Ila kumwegama |
| 24 | Mtume bashira | Siku ya kiama |

Light was lighted when the Hashim was born,
Who was at Mecca, that is in the North,
There is no help, except to lean upon him
The Messenger of the good message, on the Day of Judgement.

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|----|----------------|-----------------|
| 25 | Tufanye zawadi | Zilizo kamili |
| 26 | Nao ni uradi | Sala ya Rasuli |
| 27 | Waliumsifu | Ni kama ndotoni |
| 28 | Walokisanifu | Wamekibaini |

Let us make gifts, that are perfect,
These are supplications, blessings on the Prophet,
Those who praise him, it is as if in their dreams
They have composed it, they have distinguished it.

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|----|------------------|----------------|
| 29 | Yeye ndie kamba | Isiyo katiko |
| 30 | Yeye ndie mwamba | Usio vunjiko |
| 31 | Rabbi tukirimu | Adha na balia |
| 32 | Utupe elimu | Na kuluka zake |

He is indeed a rope, that does not break
He is indeed a coral rock, that does not break
Lord, give us the gift of his traits,
Give us education and his character

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|----|-----------------|----------------|
| 33 | Rabi tunusuru | Adha na balia |
| 34 | Tuwe maghafuru | Jamii khatwaya |
| 35 | Kula la halali | Litukaribie |
| 36 | Na yote dhalali | Utuondolee |

Lord assist us against difficulty and trouble,
May we be forgive, all of ours mistakes,
Everything that is halal, bring it close to us,
And everything that is contemptible, take away from us.

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|----|----------------|---------------|
| 37 | Na wetu wazazi | Rabi warehemu |
| 38 | Waweke makazi | Jannata Naima |

39	Sala na Salamu	Zende juu yake
40	Abbal Kassimu	Na jamaa zake

And our parents/elders, Lord, have mercy on them,
Make their abode, the splendid Paradise,
Blessing and greetings may descend upon him,
The father of Kassim and his family.

T5 Kifo Chake Mukhtari 'The Death of the Chosen'

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|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Kifo chake mukhtari | Zingatia letu pia |
| 2 | Kafariki Jamadari | Nani ataesalia |
| 3 | Ni siku ya kuikumbuka | Kwa majonzi na kulia |
| 4 | Kwa Mtume kututoka | Kutuachia dunia |

The death of the Chosen is a something we should all ponder,
He deceased a warrior, who will remain?
It is a day to be remembered with grief and tears,
As the Prophet has left us, he left us in this world.

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|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| 5 | Nani ataenyamaza | Hapana atabakia |
| 6 | Siku tunaikumbuka | Jumatatu ilikua |
| 7 | Kwa tarehe mwafaka | Kama alivyojaliwa |
| 8 | Alikuja Malaika | roho yake kuitoa |

Who will be silent, no one will remain,
We remember that day, it was a Monday,
On the date that was in agreement with when he was born,
An angel came to take his soul.

- 9 Habiballah Rasulallah

Allah's beloved, Allah's Prophet.

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 10 | Miti ilitisikaa | Na upepo kutulia |
| 11 | Wa Madina na wa Makka | Jambo hili kusikia |
| 12 | Wanawake watukoka | Ndio waloshuhudia |
| 13 | Bi Aisha kamshika | Fatuma kusaidia |

The trees swayed back and forth and the wind calmed down,
Of Madina and Mecca, upon hearing this,
The women were blessed those who witnessed,
Aisha held him, with Fatma helping.

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|----|---------------------|-----------------|
| 14 | Roho ilipumzika | Mapajani alikua |
| 15 | Na ishara kuonyesha | Keshaiaga dunia |
| 16 | Bwana abbasi kafika | Akili ilimtokaa |
| 17 | Ndipo akaugulika | Hatiani kujitoa |

His soul rested, he was on her lap,
And appeared to have already said goodbye to the world,
Abbas arrived, his wits left him,
This is when he fell very ill, taking himself away from transgression.

18 Habiballah Rasulallah

Allah's beloved, Allah's Prophet.

19 Tunakuomba Rabuka Peponi kuwapeleka

20 Wote walo wa shirika Wa Muhammadi

We ask you, Lord, to bring those to Paradise,
All who are of Muhammad's community.

T6 Alishukiwa Mtume 'A Prophet Was Carried Down'

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|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Alishukiwa Mtume | Na malaika yakini |
| 2 | Usiku wa saa nane | Kwa amri ya Jalia |
| 3 | Waliondoka usiku | Madina kuelekea |
| 4 | Katika nyumba tukufu | Baiti l-Muqaddasiaa |

Truly, a Prophet was carried down by angels,
At two o'clock in the morning, by the order by the Granter,
They left at night in the direction of Madina,
To the exalted house, the sacrificed house.

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| 5 | Alipanda mbingu | Saba bwana wetu |
| 6 | Akenda kwa Mungu | Nabii Muhammad |
| 7 | Nazo sala tano | Kuzishikiliaa |
| 8 | Ni wajibu wetu | Isilamu pia |

He ascended to the seven heavens of our Master,
He went to God, the Prophet Muhammad,
And to perseveringly hold on to the five prayers,
It is the duty of all us Muslims.

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| 9 | Kisha hapo kwa yakini | Sala alikabidhiwaa |
| 10 | Idadi ni khamsini | Swala hizo zilikua |
| 11 | Na usilamu jamia | Nao walifurahiaa |
| 12 | Kwa sala kuwaletea | Zitokazo kwa jalia |

Truly, then there he was entrusted with Prayer,
Their number was fifty, those prayers were,
And all Muslims were happy about it,
For he brought for them prayers, that come from the Granter.

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|----|----------------|----------------|
| 13 | Baada ya hapo | Tumwa karejeaa |
| 14 | Zawadi nzuri | Ametuletea |
| 15 | Nazo sala tano | Kuzishikilia |
| 16 | Ni wajibu wetu | Isilamu pia |

After this, the Messenger came back,
A beautiful gift he brought for us,
And it is to perseveringly hold on to the five prayers,
It is the duty of all us Muslims.

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|----|-----------------|---------------|
| 17 | Tunawaombea | Waliosaliaa |
| 18 | Sala kwa pamoya | Kuzingatiaa |
| 19 | Nazo sala tano | Kuzishikiliaa |
| 20 | Ni wajibu wetu | Isilamu piaa |

We implore those who remain,
To ponder communal prayer,
And to perseveringly hold on to the five prayers,
It is the duty of all us Muslims.

T7 Nitaogelea 'I Will Swim'

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|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Nitaogelea ndani ya bahari | Kwa sifa Zake Mtume |
| 2 | Zilizojaa wingi wa fakhari | Na utukufu uliozagaa |
| 3 | Wakwanza yeye tumwa Mukhutari | Ni kiongozi bil- ambiya |
| 4 | Na pia yeye bil mursalina | Ni imamu wa kuteuliwa |

I will swim in the sea, for the praises of the Prophet,
That is filled with many grandeurs, and holiness that is shining
Firstly, he is the Sent, the Chosen, he is the leader of the Prophets
And also he is among the representatives (of God), he is the selected Imam

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|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | Watu wa Makka walimkubali | Kwa ukarimu alokuanao |
| 6 | Na kwamba yeye ndie wa awali | Kuyakabili matatizo yao |
| 7 | Na ndio mana waliokubali | Walimfata kwa imani zao |
| 8 | Ikawa wao ndio mafakhali | Waliofuzu mitihani yao |

The people of Mecca agreed to him, because of the generosity he had
And because he is indeed the first, to confront their problems,
And this is the reason they agreed, they followed him by their faith
They are indeed bulls, who have passed their exams

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9 | Nyingi baraka walikirimiwa | Kutoka kwake Ilahi Karimaa |
| 10 | Na vyeo vingi walikabidhiwa | Vya utukufu na wingi Heshima |
| 11 | Baadhi yao walifaidhiwa | Kua sahaba zake Hashimaa |
| 12 | Na wengi wao walikabidhiwa | Elimu kubwa ya kutegemea |

Much blessing they were given generously, from God the Generous.
And high positions they were entrusted with, of holiness and much honour,
Some of them were given the opportunity to be the companions of the
Esteemed
And many among them were entrusted with, big education to rely on.

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|----|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 13 | Kauli zetu zimeshabaini | Kutoka kwake Ilahi Jalia |
| 14 | Atuoongoze tuwe nusurani | Na kuepuka yote maasiaa |
| 15 | Ishuke kwetu njia ya amani | Ya kwenda kwake tumwa Nabia |
| 16 | Pamoja nae tungie peponi | Ni watukufu walotangulia |

Our words have made clear, coming from God the Granter,
He may lead us so we are protected and evade all rebellion
The path of peace may come down to us, that leads to the sent Prophet
Together with him we want to enter paradise, it is the holy who go first.

T8 Tuzitaje 'Let Us Name Them'

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|---|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Tuzitaje swifa zake | Mtume wetu Nabia |
| 2 | Tukapate baraka zake | Za peponi kwenda ingiaa |

Let us name his praises, of our Messenger, the Prophet,
So that we may get his blessings and go to enter Paradise.

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|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 | Tumswalieni wetu mukhutari | Kiongozi wetu tumwa nabia |
| 4 | Kwani swifa zake hazina mithali | Alizopewa na mola Jalia |
| 5 | Umbo la mwili lililo kamili | Alilopewa na Mola Jalali |
| 6 | Shafiuna Habibuna Nabiyuna | |

Let us send blessings on our Chosen, our Leader, the Messenger,
Because his praises have no equal, he was given them by the Lord, the Granter,
The shape of his body is perfect which he was given by the Lord, the Majestic.
Our interceder, our Beloved, our Prophet.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 7 | Mtume Rasuli alipozaliwa | Miujiza mingi ilitokea |
| 8 | Toka matumboni alikotokea | Kangarisha nuru yake Nabia |
| 9 | Mwana ammati alishangiriwa | Alipomzaa tumwa Nabia |
| 10 | Shafiuna Habibuna Nabiyuna | |

When the Prophet was born, many miracles took place,
Since when he came out of the belly, the Prophet's light shed light,
His mother was applauded when she gave birth to the Prophet.
Our interceder, our Beloved, our Prophet.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 11 | Wengi ambao walijifakhari | Alipozaliwa tumwa Nabia |
| 12 | Na wengine wao walitahayari | Na ubaya wao ukafifuua |
| 13 | Miongoni mwao ikawa shuari | Kwa uwezo wake mola |
| 14 | Shafiuna Habibuna Nabiyuna | |

There are many who prided themselves when the Prophet was born,
And other who became ashamed and their badness became feckless,
Among them calm was established, by the power of his Lord.
Our interceder, our Beloved, our Prophet.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 15 | Tumwombe Mola wetu atwepushe | Na madhambi yetu tulozifanya |
| 16 | Sala na Salamu pia azishuke | Kwa kipenzi chetu tumwa Nabia |
| 17 | Aje asimame mola amfike | Huko kiamani kutuombea |
| 18 | Shafiuna Habibuna Nabiyuna | |

Let us implore our Lord to keep us from our sins that we committed,
Blessing and greeting too may descend upon our Beloved, the Prophet,
May he come to stand in front of the Lord on Judgment day to intercede for us.
Our interceder, our Beloved, our Prophet.

T9 Faida Njema 'Good Benefits'

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|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Faida njema hutushukia | Tukimswalia Muhammadi |
| 2 | Kauli rabbi iwaelezeaa | Kutoka ndani ya Qur-ani |
| 3 | Hakika yake na Malaika | Wanamsalia Muhammadi |

Good benefits will come down to us, when we send blessings Muhammad,
The Lord's word explains it in the Quran,
Truly He and His angels, send blessings upon Muhammad.

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|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 | Heshima kubwa alitengewa | Na mola wake Muhammadi |
| 5 | Na ithibati alizopewa | Ya kuongoza katika dini |
| 6 | Ajira yake kwa umma wake | Katimizwa Muhammadi |

Great honour he was bestowed by his Lord, Muhammad,
And the steadfastness he was given, to be a leader of faith,
His mission to his community was fulfilled for Muhammad.

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|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 7 | Nyoyoni mwetu tuna furaha | Ya kuzaliwa Muhammadi |
| 8 | Na Nuru yake ikaenea | Kutujengea matomaini |
| 9 | Kwa utukufu aliopewa | Tunamswalia Muhammadi |

In our hearts we have happiness as Muhammad is born,
And his light spread, and built us hope,
By the glory that he was given, we send blessings on Muhammad.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 10 | Fadhila kubwa twahitajia | Kutoka kwake Muhammadi |
| 11 | Na radhi zake kutushukia | Zituokoe na mitihani |
| 12 | Tabia yake na sira zake | Twazifatia Muhammadi |

We need big favours coming from Muhammad,
And his kindnesses upon us, may they deliver us from tests,
His character and his ways we follow, Muhammad.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 13 | Wingi wa swala twamswalia | Mtume wetu Muhammadi |
| 14 | Na as-haba waliokua | Mbaruni mwake tumwa I-amini |
| 15 | Tupate radhi za mola wake | Kwa kumswalia Muhammadi |

Much blessings we send to him, our Prophet Muhammad,
And the companions who were part of the relations of the trustworthy Prophet,
So that we may get the forgiveness of his Lord, by sending blessing on
Muhammad.

- 16 [Kiitikio cha kila ubeti 'Refrain for each stanza']

- 17 Hayya Isilamu Swallu Aleeeey

Oh Muslims, send blessing upon him!

T10 Shime Waumini 'Shime, Believers'

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|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Shime waumini | Tumswalie Rasuli |
| 2 | Tumwa wetu Muhammadi | Huwa habib Allah |
| 3 | Ndie wetu muokozi | Kesho mbele ya Qiamaa |

Shime, believers, let us send blessing upon the Prophet!
Our Messenger Muhammad, he is Allah's beloved,
He is indeed our rescuer, tomorrow in front of Judgment.

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|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 4 | Udhati wa umbo lake | Lilivyojengeka |
| 5 | Kadhalika sifa zake | Zimekamilika |
| 6 | Taratibu mwendo wake | Kauli akitamka |
| 7 | Kampamba mola wake | Kwa ukarimu nabia |

The core of his body, how it is built,
And likewise his traits are perfected,
Slowly is his way, when he delivers a speech,
His Lord has adorned him with generosity, the Prophet.

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|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| 8 | Wasia wangu natoa | Kwenu isilamu |
| 9 | Yafaa kuzingatia | Yaliyo muhimu |
| 10 | Inaghururu duniaa | Tukae na kufahamu |
| 11 | Yasije kutuzidiaa | Yaliyo haramu |

I offer my advice to you, Muslims,
It befits you to ponder what is important,
The world going astray, let us sit and understand,
May what is haram not get the better of us.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 12 | Mtume alitwambia | Sote waumini |
| 13 | Kamba kuishikilia | Na nguzo za dini |
| 14 | Ndipo zitatushukia | Radhi za mola manani |
| 15 | Pia kwenda shuhudia | Jaha ya tumwa I-amani |

The Prophet told us, all the believers,
To hold on to the rope and pillars of faith,
This is indeed how the pleasure of the Gracious Lord will come down on us,
And by bearing witness to the trustworthy Messenger's glory.

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|----|------------------------|---------------------|
| 16 | Rabi tunaomba kwako | Utukubaliee |
| 17 | Twataraji radhi zako | Zitufikiliee |
| 18 | Nyota ya kipenzi chako | Ndio utung'arishiee |
| 19 | Pepo na rehema zako | Utusabiliee |

Lord, we ask you to fulfill our supplications,
We hope for your kindness to reach us,
Your Beloved's star will indeed enlighten us,
Your Paradise and compassion, bring on our path.

T11 Bi Khadija 'Mrs Khadija'

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|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Ilimng'aria | Nuru ya mtume |
| 2 | Bi Khadija | Binti Khuwailidi |
| 3 | Baadatu ya kumwona | Kijana mwema Muhammadi |

It shone on her, the Prophet's light,
On Khadija, the daughter of Khuwaylid,
After seeing him, the good young man Muhammad.

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|---|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4 | Na shauku ikamwingia | Bi Khadija kufunga ndoa |
| 5 | Na mtume hakukataa | Katoa mahari akamwoaa |
| 6 | Waumini tunaomba duaa | Tuupate mwendo wa Mtume |
| 7 | Na ibada aliyoshushiwa | Tuifate kwa hima na shime |
| 8 | Tutapata tuloahidiwa | Mambo mema pasi na kinyume |

Thus the wish to get married entered Khadija,
And the Prophet did not refuse her, he paid the bride-wealth and married her,
The faithful, we make dua, so that we get the ways of the Prophet,
And the ibada he sent down, let us follow it with perseverance and effort,
We will get what we were promised, good thing without their opposites.
Our interceder, our Beloved, our Prophet.

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|----|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9 | Aliangalia mwendo wa Mtume | Bi Khadija binti Khuwailidi |
| 10 | Muda wote alikua | Akiishi nae Muhammadi |
| 11 | Roho yake ikaridhikaa | Kwa tabia alizoonaa |
| 12 | Ni kijana aliyesifikaa | Kwa kila sifa za kiungwana |
| 13 | Uso wake ukabarikiwa | Bi Khadija mwingi wa heshima |

She observed the Prophet's ways, Khadija binti Khuwaylid,
All the time that she was living with Muhammad,
Her heart was content, with the character she saw,
He was a praiseworthy young man, with every traits of a gentleman,
Her face was blessed, Khadija of much honour.

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|----|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 14 | Jina lake likahesabiwa | Miongoni mwa ridhaa wemaa |
| 15 | Na daraja akapandishiwa | Kwa baraka za tumwa hashima |
| 16 | Ziliendelea sifa za Mtumee | Kung'arisha binti Khuwailidi |
| 17 | Kwa elimu aliyopataa | Kutoka kwake Muhammadi |

Her name is counted among those of good approval,
Her rank was heightened by the blessings of the Prophet, the Hashim,
The Prophet's traits went on to shed light on the daughter of Khuwaylid,
Because of the education she received from Muhammad.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 18 | Na ishara | Ikathibiti |
| 19 | Kwa Khadija | Usoni mwake |
| 20 | Kwamba yeye amefaulu | Kua ni nzuri tabia yake |

And the sign was established,
In Khadija's face,
That he/she has succeeded, by having a good character.

Zamzam

Z1 Mzuri Sana Nabia 'The Prophet Is Very Beautiful' (cf. B5)

1 Mzuri sana nabia Wallahi nitawambia

2 Nuru ilituenea Hapo alipozaliwa

3 Mzuri sana nabia

Very beautiful is the Prophet, By God he has been chosen,
Light has pervaded us, when he was born.
Very beautiful is the Prophet.

4 Mtume hana methali Amepambwa kweli kweli

5 Mwenye uso jamili Nasabu yake miali (sic 'ni ali')

6 Mzuri sana nabia

The Messenger has no comparison, he is truly, truly adorned,
A beautiful fair face, his lineage is high.
Very beautiful is the Prophet.

7 Kama ua la waridi Tumwa wetu maridadi

8 Bure yao mahasidi Memuhifadhi wadudi

9 Mzuri sana nabia

Like a rose flower, Our elegant Prohet
The enviers without success, he is protected by the Most Loving
Very beautiful is the Prophet.

10 Akiinua hatua Hutupa mbele kifua

11 Shujaa usa sawa sawa Hakuna asomjua

12 Mzuri sana nabia

When he sets forth a step, he puts forth his chest,
He is a real hero, there is no one who does not know him.
Very beautiful is the Prophet.

13 Nywele zake ni nyeusi si za nyumbu si farasi

14 Laini sizo kiasi Harifu yake amini

15 Mzuri sana nabia

His hair is back, it is not like that of a gnu nor that of a horse,
It is soft without measure, the scent of the Amin.
Very beautiful is the Prophet.

16 Swala njema na salamu Zimshukie hashima

17 Na Swahaba za kiramu Na Waisilamu pamoja

18 Mzuri sana nabia

Blessings and peace, may descend upon the Hashim,
And his honourable companions, and Muslims with them.
Very beautiful is the Prophet.

22 Mtume Akawambia 'The Prophet Told Them'

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|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Mtume akawambia | Sasa metajika dini |
| 2 | Ibada kujifanyia | Msihofu asilani |
| 3 | Hapana lakukuchelea | Kamba natushikeni |
| 4 | Ushindi utatujia | Katuahidi Manani |

The Prophet told them: Now you have been explained the faith,
Worship for yourselves, never fear,
Nothing shall delay you, and let us hold on to the rope,
Victory will come to us, the Gracious has promised us so.

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|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | Answarry muhajirina ⁸ | Hapo wakawa mbioni |
| 6 | Mikono wakashikana | Kumtwii I-amini |
| 7 | Wakaanza kupigana | Kwa kuiokoa dini |
| 8 | Hakika walikazana | Kuwapiga wapinzani |

The Ansar and Muhajirun were busy and quick,
Giving each other a hand, in obeying the Trustworthy,
The started to fight in order to rescue their faith,
Truly, they held on to each other and were firm to fight their opponents.

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| 9 | Wakaacha mji wao | Na mali zenye thamani |
| 10 | Na pia aila zao | Wakiwemo ukiwani |
| 11 | Kuihami dini yao | Ndo kusudi la moyoni |
| 12 | Zikazidi nguvu zao | Wakawashinda intahi |

They left their hometowns and their wealth,
And also their families, as if they were bereaved,
To protect their faith, that was the intention in their hearts,
Their efforts increased, they overcame them in the end.

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|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 13 | Badiru pia uhudi | Wakangia uwanjani |
| 14 | Na vita vikubwa hadi | vya mfano duniani |
| 15 | Katu nyuma haturudi | Wakasogea usoni |
| 16 | Kwa baraka za wadudi | Nae akawaamini |

At Badr and also Uhud they entered the battlefield,
And a big wars and example to the world,
'Never we shall turn back' thus they moved forward,
By the blessing of the Most Loving, and he put his trust in them.

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|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 17 | Dua tunamuombea | Tumwa wetu I-amini |
| 18 | Na maswahaba jalia | Rabi watie kundini |
| 19 | K | Na mema yenye thamani |
| 20 | Na sisi tutajalia | Tuingie nao kundini |

We make *dua* for our trustworthy Prophet,
And the companions, Granter, our Lord, make them among (his) group,
K [left empty in their *buku*], and good things of worth,
And fulfill us to enter into their group as well.

⁸ *Ansar* refers to Muhammad's helpers at Madina and *Muhajirun* to those who fled with him from Mecca to Madina.

23 Tuokoe Ya Rabby 'Rescue Us, Oh Lord'

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|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Tuokoe Yaaraby | Mola wetu Rahmany |
| 2 | Ili tuingie peponi | Kwa ridhaa yako x4 |

Rescue us, oh Lord, Our Most Merciful Protector,
So that we may enter paradise by your approval.

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|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 3 | Hadhuki Mola mwengine | Wakusujudiwa |
| 4 | Akhera na duniani | Ila wewe yaa Allah |
| 5 | Jamii ya waja wako | Walotegemea |
| 6 | Fadhila za Rahmani | Kwako wewe yaa Allah |

There will not appear another Lord, to be prostrated to,
In the hereafter and this world, except you, oh Allah,
All of your slaves who depend on,
The favours of the Most Merciful, from you, oh Allah,

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|----|------------------------|--------------|
| 7 | Ndiye muumba wa mbingu | Na ardhi pia |
| 8 | Akayagawa mafungu | alokadiria |
| 9 | Akapamba ulimwengu | Na ukavutia |
| 10 | Na mimi Nafsi yangu | Ina shuhudia |

He is indeed the creator of the heavens and the earth, too,
He divided the portions/shares that he measured out,
He decorated the world and it was appealing,
And me, my soul, is a witness.

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|----|----------------------|--------------|
| 11 | Ndiye muumba wa nuru | Iliyotimia |
| 12 | Na mtume Mashuhuri | Akatuletea |
| 13 | Na makazi ya fahari | Akamuwekea |
| 14 | Kila mtenda mazuri | Ende kwingia |

He is indeed the creator of light, that is perfect,
And a famous Prophet he brought for us,
And in a glorious abode he put him,
Everyone who does good deeds will enter it.

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|----|----------------------|---------------|
| 15 | Mola hakim wa haki | Asohukumiwa |
| 16 | Hapana aloshitaki | Na mshitakiwa |
| 17 | Mazuri aloyajiki | Akesha amua |
| 18 | Katu mwengine hajiki | Akakupikua |

The Lord is the just Judge who cannot be judged,
There is no one who accuses and no accused,
The good deeds that he has made come, he has already decided upon,
Never will anyone else appear who will be more than you.

Z4 Tumwa Mkaramu 'The Generous Prophet' (cf. B11, K1, T4)

1	Tumwa mkaramu	Ameshadhahiri
2	Nuru za dhilamu	Khairi l bashari
3	Hatozawa bwana	Mfano rasuli
4	Twampenda sana	Abal batuli

The Generous Prophet has been revealed
 The light in the darkness, the best of mankind
 No master/man will be born, like the Prophet
 We love him so much, the father of the Virgin

5	Zilifurahika	Jamii kauli (sic)
6	Alipozaliwa	Banil Adinani
7	Insi na majini	Wote walisema
8	Sote furahani	kuzawa hashima

They were overjoyed, the whole tribe
 When he was born, the Bani Adinan
 Humans and jinns, all said
 We are all in joy over the the Honourable One's birth

9	Kazaliwa makka	Mji wa Sharafu
10	Nchi ya baraka	Hiyo maarufu
11	Nyota zilizimwa	Nuru ikawaka
12	Kafa ya wanyama	Waliotamka

He wa born in Mecca, the city of the noble
 The blessed land, that it famous
 The stars were extinguished, Light shone
 The entirety of animals who uttered...

13	Maneno mazuri	Fasihi kalamu
14	Walikibashiri	Na kutabasamu
15	Tumwa kazaliwa	Twaiban-daima
16	Wanja ametiwa	Machoni yakini

... Beautiful words, clear speech
 They brought the news, and smiled
 The Prophet is born, forever good,
 He has put antimony on his eyes, verily.

17	Tena kasafika	Mahta rasuli
18	Amenadhifika	Kushinda johari
19	Thumwa ni mzuri	Umbo na Twabia
20	Jasho la ambari	Rih- ya Miski ya

Also he is pure, makhta Prophet,⁹
 He is clean, better than a jewel,
 The Prophet is beautiful, his body and character,
 His sweat is ambergris, a perfumed aroma.

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|----|-------------------|-----------------|
| 21 | Yeye ndiye kamba | Isiyokatika |
| 22 | Yeye ndiye mwamba | Usiovunjika |
| 23 | Rabi tukirimu | kwa sifa zako |
| 24 | Utupe elimu | Na khuluka zake |

He is indeed a rope, that does not break
 He is indeed a coral rock, that does not break
 Lord, give us the gift of his traits,
 Give us education and his character

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|----|-----------------|----------------|
| 25 | Na wetu wazazi | Rabi warehemu |
| 26 | Waweke Makazi | Janatu Naimu |
| 27 | Swala na salamu | zende juu yake |
| 28 | Abal Qalamu | Na jamaa zake |

And our parents/elders, Lord, have mercy on them,
 Make their abode, the splendid Paradise,
 Blessing and greetings may descend upon him,
 The father of the pen, and his family.

⁹ *Rasuli* is clearly a folk etymology, while *makhta* seems cryptic even to them.

Z5 Kaumba na Moto ‘And He Created The Fire’

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|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Mwana Adamau sikia | yafaa kuzingatia |
| 2 | Mola mwenyezi kaumba pepo | kwa waja wema |
| 3 | pia kaumba moto | uitwao jahanama |

Child of Adam/human listen, it is appropriate to ponder
 (that) God the Almighty has created Paradise, for the good people
 Also he created the Fire, that is called Jahannam

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|---|---------------------------|
| 4 | Mola Mwenyezi kaumba pepo |
| 5 | Kaumba na moto jahannama |

God the Almighty has created Paradise
 Also he created the Fire, Jahannam

Z6 Sote Tunasikitika ‘We Are All Mourning’

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|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Sote tunasikitika | machozi yanatutoka |
| 2 | Watu wanatuondoka | waiaga dunia |

We are all mourning, tears are coming out of our (eyes)
People are leaving us, they say farewell to the world

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|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3 | Ukimwi kitu | kitu hatari |
| 4 | Sote natujihadhari | tunatoa tahadhari |
| 5 | Ukimwi unatuuwa | |

AIDS is a thing, a dangerous thing
We should all guard ourselves, we issue a warning
AIDS kills us

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|---|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 6 | Tutoeni kampeni | kampeni za kidini |
| 7 | Kupitia redioni | na kwenye televisheni |

Let's mount a campaign, a religious campaign
Through the radio, and through TV

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|---|----------------------|------------------|
| 8 | Mwanangu nilikwambia | lakini hukusikia |
| 9 | Sina la kusaidia | ila nakuhurumia |

My child I told you but you would not listen
(Now) I cannot help you but to have pity for you

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|---------------------|
| 10 | Kwa wale waloupata | wautangaze haraka |
| 11 | Matibabu kuyapata | ya afya njema yafaa |

To those who got it, they should announce so quickly
To get treatment, for good health is the proper thing

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|----|--|
| 12 | We tell all the people about dangerous |
| 13 | Please don't take this |
| 14 | Your danger is |

We tell all the people about the danger
Please do not contract this
Do not go crazy

Qadiriya Amani

Q1 Cheza Cheza 'Dance, Dance'

- 1 Sherehe yo
- 2 Ya Harusi imeshatimia

A feast!
The wedding is already done.
- 3 Wallahi kuoa raha, kuolewa ni furaha
- 4 Sherehe yo
- 5 Ya Harusi imeshatimia

By God, to marry is bliss, to get married is happiness,
The feast
Of the wedding is already complete.
- 6 Tumefurahi si haba
- 7 Ni harusi si msiba
- 8 Sherehe yo
- 9 Ya Harusi imeshatimia

We are not a little happy,
This is a wedding not a funeral,
Oh, a feast,
Of the wedding is already complete.
- 10 Wamelingana mahaba
- 11 Wakiona na kushiba
- 12 Sherehe yo
- 13 Ya Harusi imeshatimia

They harmonise with each other in love,
When they see (each other) they are satisfied
Oh, a feast!
Of the wedding is already complete.
- 14 Ya Harusi imeshatimia
- 15 Wallahi Kuoa ni raha
- 16 Kuolewa ni furaha

... Of the wedding is already complete.
By God, to marry is bliss,
To get married is happiness.
- 17 Vigelegele

Ululations.
- 18 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana
- 19 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

20 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

21 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

22 Ni harusi cheza leo cheza leo

It is a wedding, dance today, dance today.

23 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

24 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

25 Ni harusi cheza leo cheza leo

It is a wedding, dance today, dance today.

26 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

27 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

28 Leo umepata bwana

29 Maneno hakuna

Today you got a husband

30 Ni harusi cheza leo cheza leo

It is a wedding, dance today, dance today.

31 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

32 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

33 Ni harusi cheza leo cheza leo

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
It is a wedding, dance today, dance today.

34 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

35 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.
Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

36 Leo umepata bwana

37 Maneno akuna

Today you got a husband,
There is nothing else to say.

38 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

39 Cheza cheza leo umepata bwana

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

Dance, dance, today you got a husband.

40 Ya Harusi imeshatimia

41 Wallahi kuoa ni raha

42 Ya Harusi imeshatimia

43 Kuolewa ni furaha

Of the wedding is complete.

By God, to marry is bliss.

Of the wedding is complete.

To get married is happiness.

Maulidi ya Homu tesserae

H1 Wasalaam 'With Peace'

- 1 Wasalaam
- 2 Allahumma sali ala habibi muhammadi

Peace
Oh Lord send blessings on the Beloved, Muhammad.

- 3 Ee waala ali muhammadi salli
- 4 Wasallim alayh

And on his companion send blessings
And peace upon them.

H2 Ashiraka al-Badru 'The Moon Has Risen'

- 1 Ashiraka al-badru
The moon has risen
- 2 Allah Ahuya Ya Allah, Allah

Allah, oh Allah, Allah.

H3 Hua maulana 'He Is Our Lord'

- 1 Allah, Allah huwa maulana
- 2 Huwaa huwa maulana huwa

Allah, Allah is our Lord
He, He is our Lord he is

- 3 Maulana ya Rabbi Salama
- 4 Huwaa huwa maulana huwa

Our Lord, oh you are the Peaceful Lord,
He, He is our Lord he is

H4 Mahabubana 'Our Beloved'

- 1 Marihaba
- 2 Salli wa sallimu ala rabbana
- 3 Alaa n-nabiy mahabubana

Welcome
 Blessings and peace
 on the Prophet, our beloved

- 4 Twaha rasu-uli shafiuna
 5 Yawma lil-khasiratu wannadama

And prophet appeared as our saviour
 On the day of spoil and harshness

- 6 Ulipashuzile mwezi zahiri
 7 Zikashikamana zote kamari

The moon split visibly
 and the stars held on to each other

- 8 Sijamuanapo mtu mzuri zaidi
 9 Ya mtume

I have not seen anyone more beautiful than
 The Prophet

- 10 Uso wa furaha kama hashima

A face of gladness like the Honourable

- 11 Pindi kirijea safariye yenye daraja
 12 Hadi gorofani kichungia mwana khadija
 13 Alipofika varada ya nyumba
 14 Alimuona Bi Khadija

When he came back from his journey of rank
 till upstairs to see Mrs Khadija
 When he reached the veranda
 He saw Bi Khadija

- 15 Pana na wengine wandamizi
 16 Wema wa mbeja
 17 Na Mtume kafuatana na
 18 Watu wema

And the Prophet was followed by our
 Blessed men
 And the Prophet was with the
 Good people

- 19 Tumwa na malaika wa mbinguni
20 Wakamwandama

The Prophet and the angels of God
Are together on this journey

H5 Jalla Jalaluh ‘The Glorious God’

- 1 Jalla Jalaluh Mola wahidu

There is only one glorious God

- 2 Jalla Jalaluh Mola wahidu

Only one glorious God and God is Only one

H6 Zulijalali ‘The Majestic’

- 1 Zuli jalali man aala

The one having majesty who is higher?

- 2 Lan talumi taaluma

- 3 Lan talumi Lan talumi

You shall not not the knowledge
You shall not know, you shall not know.

H7 Khamsa ‘Five’

- 1 Khamsa

- 2 Khamsa arikanu liisilamu khamsa

Five
There are five Pillars of Islam

- 3 Khamsa arikanu liisilamu khamsa

The Pillars of Islam are five

H8 Leo Mambo ‘Problems Today’

- 1 Leo mambo eh na kesho mambo eh
- 2 Aah, njooni mtazame

Problems today and problems tomorrow
Ah, come and have a look.

H9 Silali ‘I shall not sleep’

- 1 Silali naingojea, Ya Allah,
- 2 Silali naingojea, Hua ya Allah
- 3 Lailat ul-Qadiri, Maulana, silali naingojea.

I shall not sleep, I wait for it, oh Allah,
I shall not sleep, I wait for it, oh he is Allah,
The Night of Power, our Lord, I do not sleep, I wait for it.

H11 Al-jannatu wa-naʿīmuḥā ‘Paradise and Its Beatitude’

- 1 Al-jannatu wa-naʿīmuḥā saʿadu li-mā
Paradise and its beatitude, fortune on who,
- 2 saʿadu li-man saʿadun ʿalayh

Fortune on who, fortune on him,

Other full texts

O1 Jagwa: Maalbino ‘Albinos’

- 1 Jagwa tunalalama vitendo vya katili vinavyotendewa wale maalbino
- 2 Jagwa tunalalama sana vitendo vya katili vinavyotendewa wale Walemavu wa ngozi
- 3 Watanazania wote tushirikiane tupige vita vitendo vya kikatili
- 4 Marubino
- 5 Wamekosa nini
- 6 Mimi namsema: eti kwa nini?
- 7 Nikifikiria hakiingii akilini
- 8 Jana kweupe
- 9 Unamshika mkono unamkata
- 10 Ukiuliza hela hizo hela gani ya kuwaweka wenzenu mashakani
- 11 Mtoto wake wa kumzaa unamnyakua
- 12 Bila huruma waenda kumua
- 13 Dunia sasa inaenda mwisho haya yote sababu ya matatizo
- 14 Wewe kwa nini unashindwa kujikata mwenyewe
- 15 Kuna Wengine wanauliwa
- 16 Kuna Wengine wananyongwa
- 17 Kuna Wengine wanachinjwa
- 18 Yote kwa sababu ya ushindani
- 19 Yote kwa sababu ya ufisadi
- 20 Miye napinga na jagwa
- 21 Jacky napinga na jagwa
- 22 Swala hilo si la kulifumbia macho
- 23 Raia tushirikiane
- 24 Marubina wanauliwa kinyama
- 25 Swala hilo si la kulifumbia macho
- 26 Marubina wanauawa aha
- 27 Twalinde usiku na mchana
- 28 Tuwakamate wanotenda vitendo vya kinyama
- 29 Tuwalinde tuwalinde
- 30 Tuwalinde marubino
- 31 Tuwalinde walemavu wa ngozi

We, Jagwa, cry out about the deathly deed that are done to albinos,
 We Cry out loudly about the deathly deed that are done to the disabled of skin,
 All Tanzanian, let us unite to wage war on these deathly deeds,
 Albinos,
 What is their mistake?
 I say about him/her: Why?
 When I think about it it is inconceivable (lit. It does not enter the mind)
 Yesterday at dawn
 You take his/her hand and cut it off him/her.
 When you are asked about money, what kind of money is it that puts your next
 in trouble?

His own child you snatch away from him.
Without mercy you go to kill him/her.
The world now comes to an end, all that because of problems.
Why do you fail to cut yourself?
Others are being killed,
Others are being throttled,
Others are being slaughtered.
All that because of rivalry
All that because of corruption/immorality.
I oppose this with Jagwa.
This is not a question to close the eyes upon.
Citizens, let us unite,
Albinos are killed like animals
This is not a question to close the eyes upon.
Albinos are killed,
Let us protect them night and day
Let us arrest those who commit these animal acts.
Let us protect them, let us protect them.
Let us protect the albinos.
Let us protect the disabled of skin.

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|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Baba mimi nawachukiya | Walee wanaoamuwa |
| 2 | Alibino kuwauwa | Viungo vyao kuvichukuwa |
| 3 | Wakishakwenda kuwapelekeya | Wale wanowambiya |
| 4 | Miviungo ukinileteya | wee tajiri utakuwa |

Father, I despise those, who resolve to,
Kill the albinos, by taking their limbs.
When they have already brought them to those who tell them:
'If you bring (more) me limbs, you will be rich.'

- | | | |
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| 5 | Tunawalani waso imani | walojaa hapa nchini |
| 6 | wanaowauawa alibino | kwa makosa gani |
| 7 | twamba tuwambiyeni | hii ni akili gani |
| 8 | nyee yakushiriki imani | hii ni akili gani |
| 9 | nyie mola anawalani | |

We condemn those without faith, who are so many in this country
Who kill the albinos, for what mistake?
We want to tell you: What kind of reasoning is this?
To involve faith in this, What kind of reasoning is this?
God condemns you.

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| 10 | Sipeke mwanangu unachukiya | hatamimi babayako naumiya |
| 11 | Kiongozi wa nchi analiya | mawaziri na wabunge wajinamiya |
| 12 | Wananchi wote wazungumziya | kwa kuona vifo vyaendelea |
| 13 | Walemavu wangozi wanauliwa | viungo vyao vyachukuliwa |

You are not alone my child in despising, even me, your father, I hurt,
The leader of the country cries the ministers and MPs
All citizens speak about it, as they see the deaths going on
The disabled of skin are being killed, their limbs are taken away.

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| 14 | Kwa kuona vifo vyaendelea | walemavu wangozi wanauliwa |
| 15 | na viungo vyao vyachukuliwa | eti utajiri kutafutiya |

To see the deaths going on, the disabled of skin are being killed,
Their limbs are taken away, in the search of wealth.

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| 16 | Tunawalani tunawalaaaaaaa waso na imani waso na imaniiiii |
| 17 | Walojaa hapa nchini walojaa hapa nchini walojahapa nchiniiii |
| 18 | Wanawauwa maalibino kwa makosa gani kwa makosa gani kwa makosa ganiiii |
| 19 | Twaomba twambiyeni |

We despise them, the people without faith, without faith
They have become many in this country, they have become many in this country
Albinos are being killed, for which mistake/crime? for which mistake/crime? for
which mistake/crime?
We ask you to explain us.

03 Q Chief: Si ulinizaa wewe 'Did not you father me?'

- 1 Si ulinizaa wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa
- 2 Si ulinizaa wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa

Did not you father me and deny me? Now how comes you think I am suitable?
Did not you father me and deny me? Now how comes you think I am suitable?

- 3 Kosa langu kosa langu ni lipi baba?
- 4 Kosa langu kosa langu ni lipi baba?

What is my mistake, father?

- 5 Ulinikana tangu tumboni
- 6 Ukamkana hadi mama mama'angu
- 7 Nyumbani nyumbani wakamfukuza
- 8 Shuleni shuleni wakamfukuza
- 9 Wakamwita malaya kwa miimba aliyobeba
- 10 Iya ni mimi jamani, jamani, jamani
- 11 Miezi tisa ilipo ada chini ya mbuyu nikazaliwa
- 12 Mifuko ya ramba nikafunikiwa
- 13 Ili baridi lisinipige

You denied me since I was in (my mother's) belly
You even denied my mother
at home, they chased her away
at school, they chased her away
they called her 'prostitute' because of the pregnancy
but that was me, friends
after nine months as it is usual, I was born below a baobab tree
I was rapped in grass baskets
so that the cold would not beat me

- 14 Kwa pressa na mawazo
- 15 Mama'angu mama'angu mama'angu akaiga dunia mama'angu
- 16 Nalia nalia nalia mimi nalia
- 17 Nalia ukiwa wa mama'angu
- 18 Niacheni nilie

Because of the pressure and the thoughts
my mother, my mother, my mother said goodbye to the world, my mother
I cry, I cry, I cry, me, I cry
I cry, the bereavement of my mother
leave me crying

- 19 Pita njia pita njia akaniokota
 20 Akanilea akanisomesha
 21 Nikamthamini akanithamini
 22 Nikamwita mama akajibu mwanangu
 23 Leo nimekuwa kanisimulia

Someone came along the way and rescued me
 She brought me up, sent me to school
 I respect/value her, she respects/values me
 I call her 'mama' and she answers me 'my child'
 today I am grown she told me

- 24 Inauma sana unajua inakera sana unajua
 25 Eti mtu baba'ako yupo ila hakujali wala hakupendi
 26 Hana time na wewe
 27 Inauma sana inauuma sana

It hurts a lot, you know, it torments a lot, you know
 Hey, your father is there, but he does not care for you nor does he love you
 He does not have time for you
 It hurts a lot, it hurts a lot

- 28 Moyo wangu sijui kama nitaweza kumsamehe
 29 Moyo wangu sijui kama nitaweza kumsamehe
 30 Nimejaribu nimeshindwa kumsamehe mimi siwezi
 31 Namwachia Mungu baba muumba wa vyote

My heart, I do not know if I'll be able to forgive him
 I tried, I failed, to forgive him I cannot
 I leave him to God, the creator of everything

- 32 Si uliniza wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa
 33 Si uliniza wewe ukanikataa sasa iweje unaona mimi nafaa
 34 Sasa maisha yameninyookea unaona mimi nafaa

Did not you give birth to me and deny me? Now how comes you think me fit?
 Did not you give birth to me and deny me? Now how comes you think me fit?
 Now that life is smooth, you think I am suitable?

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Sorry, Sorry, Zanzibaris,
Sorry to us all for the accident.

- 20 Wamekwenda
- 21 Ndugu zetu wa Aanzibar
- 22 Atayefuata
- 23 si mwengine ni mimi na wewe

They are gone,
Our brothers from Zanzibar,
Who will follow (them),
Is none other than me and you.

- 24 Watanzania wanalia nguvu kazi kuipoteza
- 25 Wengine ni kinamama na watoto walioenda
- 26 Tunabaki kuhuzunika
- 27 makubwa yalotukuta
- 28 Kila mtu ameshtuka
- 29 Taifa limetingishika
- 30 Kweli uchungu unauma
- 31 Ila pole mlofiwa
- 32 Dua tele ntaomba
- 33 Walaze pema
- 34 Mjuwe tuko pamoja

Tanzanians are crying, because they lost their strength, their work,
Many of those who went are women and children,
We are left to be sad,
About the disaster that happened to us,
Everyone is devastated,
The nation is shaken,
Truly, the bitterness hurts,
(We can) only (say) sorry to those who are bereaved,
Plenty of supplications I will make,
May they rest in peace.
Know that we are together in this.

- 35 Ni machozi watu wanalia
- 36 Ni majonzi watu wanalia
- 37 Kumwomba mola
- 38 Atupe subira

It is tears people are crying,
It is grief/mourning, people are crying,
To ask the Lord,
To give us patience.

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